COLLAGE A VILLAGE

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ARTISTIC
DISCOVERY

MAY/JUNE 2013 ISSUE 48

PUT A bird ON IT!

GO faux

GLASS
HEADPINS
& CARVED
STAMPS

3 CURES for artist block

p. 26

big RESULTS from our Mini Challenge

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Never Again...Again (detail) by Joan Dorsay, with block designs from Elly Sienkiewicz. From the special exhibit "Hands All Around 2012." Top Right: *Dreamtime* (detail) by Antonia Hering. From the special exhibit "Quilts: A World of Beauty."

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Photo by Chris Vaccaro

How do you get out of a rut? How do you tackle a blank canvas? How do you make art when your muse can't be heard over the din of laundry, errands, and cooking?

These questions plague me just as much as they do most of you. Thankfully, I get a good dose of art appreciation in as a perk of my job. Even if I'm not making art, I'm looking at it all of the time!

I have three favorite ways to get through these creative patches:

1. Never stop at the end of a project. When I finish something up, I immediately start on another project. That might mean just using my already dirty paintbrushes to prep some canvases with gesso, or even just getting all the supplies out for the next project. This way, there is always something calling to me from my studio. I'm not hindered by a clean desk.

2. Work on something else. If I need to make a blank journal book but I'm not quite in the zone, I might start by folding some scraps into origami shapes to delight my kids, or use up the last bit of paint to color the edge of a tag for a future gift. Inevitably, my engine just needs to warm up and then I'm ready to get to work on my book. It's like I'm an art jalopy.

3. Use something you haven't used. If you were to tell me you have used every single item in your studio, I'm not sure I'd believe you. There are many reasons we don't use that favorite paint color (you love looking at it), the vintage book (you can't bear to tear the pages), or the new tool (you are afraid to give it a go). The secret is just to use something, even just a little. Don't expect to create a work of art; expect to exercise your brain. How does that paint look on that paper, how does that book make you think about a new subject, and how does playing with that new tool give you insight into all the things you can experiment with?

If you'd like more ideas, just flip through our bird-lovin' issue and try any of the ideas that strike your fancy, or skip right to Adventures in Arting (page 26) for some more ways to work through artist's block!

Jenn

Editor
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- Upload your challenge art.

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Art Brew

1 new home 12 Asian motifs

1 extended space for endless embroidering

21 unanswered calls 7 cups of jasmine tea

12 pillows for never-ending dreams

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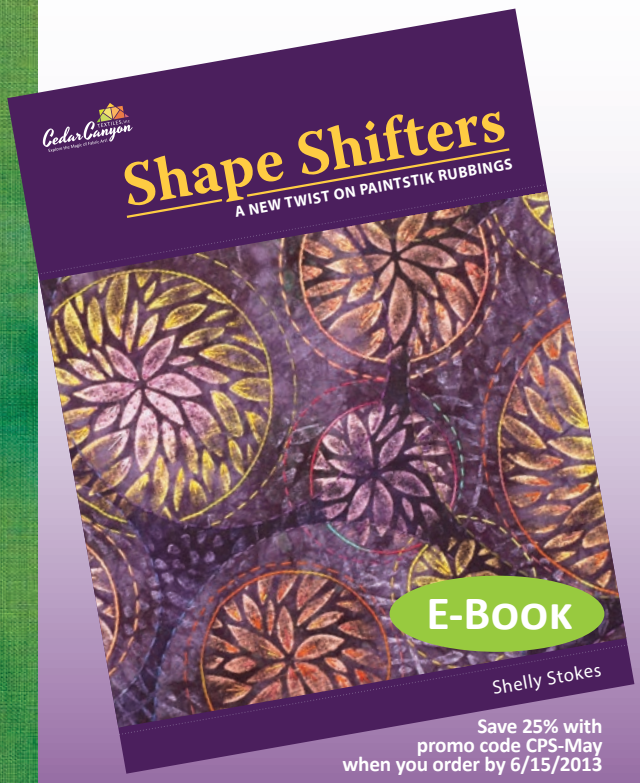

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who did this?

contributors to Cloth Paper Scissors®

Julie Fei-Fan Balzer is a mixed-media artist living in New York City. She loves color, high contrast, seeing the artist's hand, learning new things, and going on artistic adventures. Check out her Adventures in Arting podcast.
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Alice Berg left a career in the quilting industry to embark on an exciting, new path into mixed-media art. Alice's artwork can be found in the gallery of the Sautee Nacoochee Community Association in Sautee, Georgia.
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Ashlie Blake is a mixed-media artist residing in beautiful Hudson Valley, New York, with her husband and three young sons. Her artwork has a whimsical feel and embodies bright and vibrant colors. She is inspired by nature and wildlife, the beauty of life, and her children.
paintingbliss.com

Shayna Butler is an artist, writer, and jewelry maker living in Alabama. She is a pastor's wife and mom to two wonderful kids. Shayna loves to experiment and work on new art techniques. You can find more of her art and a link to her shop on her blog.
ispywithmycraftyeyes.blogspot.com

Jen Cushman is a natural storyteller who found mixed-media art 12 years ago and never looked back. She is drawn to the imperfect, funky, quirky, artsy, and the authentic. Her latest book is Making Metal Jewelry. Jen is the Director of Education and Marketing for Susan Lenart Kazmer ICE Resin®.
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Gabriela Domville Dondisch has always been a creative person. She began her career as a fashion designer and aspiring artist in 1989. She likes working with fabrics and using her sewing machines to draw. Gabriela teaches private groups and studies photography.
gabrieladomville.com

Cloth Paper Scissors Workshop™ videos by Julie Fei-Fan Balzer, Jen Cushman, and Jenny Cochran Lee are available now at **shop.clothpaperscissors.com**.

Elena Lai Etcheverry is a mixed-media artist and the founder of Charity Wings, a non-profit organization for artists and crafters who want to raise money and awareness through art and creativity. Charity Wings has an Art Center in Southern California to serve the art community and other non-profits.
charitywings.org

Danee Kaplan is a life-long crafter. She has dabbled in all areas of crafting, but always returns to rubber stamping, paper, and mixed-media arts. Danee lives in Michigan with her husband and two children.
rainingjellybeans.blogspot.com

Jenny Cochran Lee can't resist a new technique and is currently building an art supply empire in her basement. She is thrilled to share her work in two 2013 Cloth Paper Scissors DVD Workshops and at CREATE Chicago.
texterial.blogspot.com

Andrea Ockey Parr is a mixed-media artist who enjoys combining paper, fabric, stitching, and ink. Her projects have been featured in various publications. To see more of Andrea's work, visit her blog.
snappingmonsters.blogspot.com

Renee Rogers loves the sunshine on the Oklahoma plains and drinks the wild air. She enjoys being home, but always has a bag ready to travel to swim in the sea. Renee believes everyone is a teacher and she tries to learn something new every day—often that learning is from her mistakes.

Nikki Smith is a self-taught, successful entrepreneur and artist who has bitten the fruit of art and never glanced back. Follow this mother of two on her many sinfully delightful bouts of creativity on her blog.
booksmithstudio.com

Marty Yokawonis lives near Mount Dora, Florida, with her husband, her cats, a spur-thighed tortoise, box turtles, and a parakeet. Marty is a member of the Florida Watercolor Society and exhibits her work regularly in juried shows.
etsy.com/shop/PaintersLoft

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happy tweet

Michelle Mach @ BeadsAndBooks:

"I'm enjoying your "bucket list" issue [Jan/Feb 2013]. I hope it becomes an annual tradition!"

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A GLIMPSE INTO THE WORLD OF **cloth paper scissors**

Just received my latest edition [of Cloth Paper Scissors]. Yummy as usual! My weekend is complete.

Marion Allen

I look forward to every issue and have saved most of the past. Great place to find inspiration or some how-to.

Billie Jean Stout

ERRATA: The url for Dumpster Divers in "A Conversation with Ellen Benson" should have been dumpsterdivers.org, not dumpsterdivers.com. We apologize for any inconvenience this error may have caused.

bird BANTER

Do you have a favorite type of bird to use in your art? Here are the results:

66% **66% use whatever bird is flying around.**

18% **18% like owls.**

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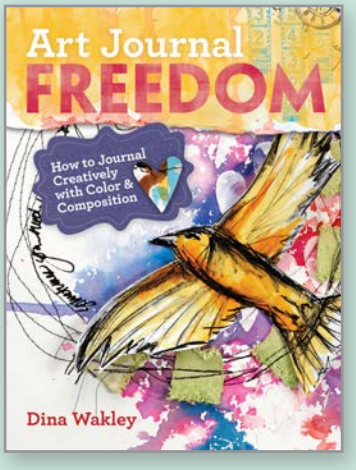

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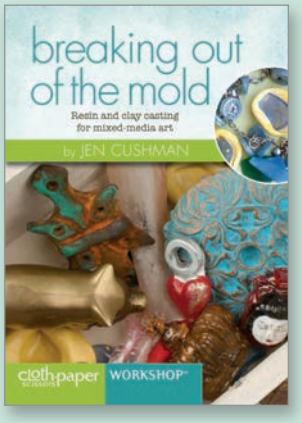

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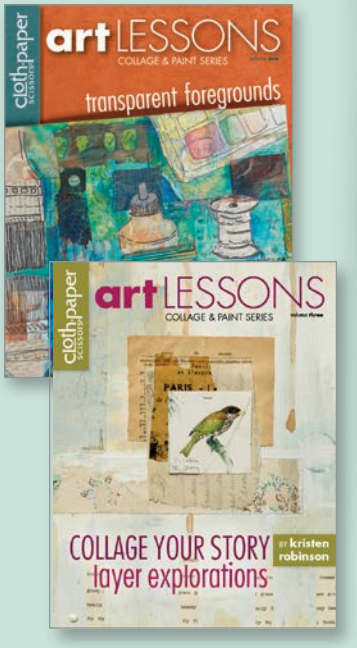

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Review by Tina Hussey

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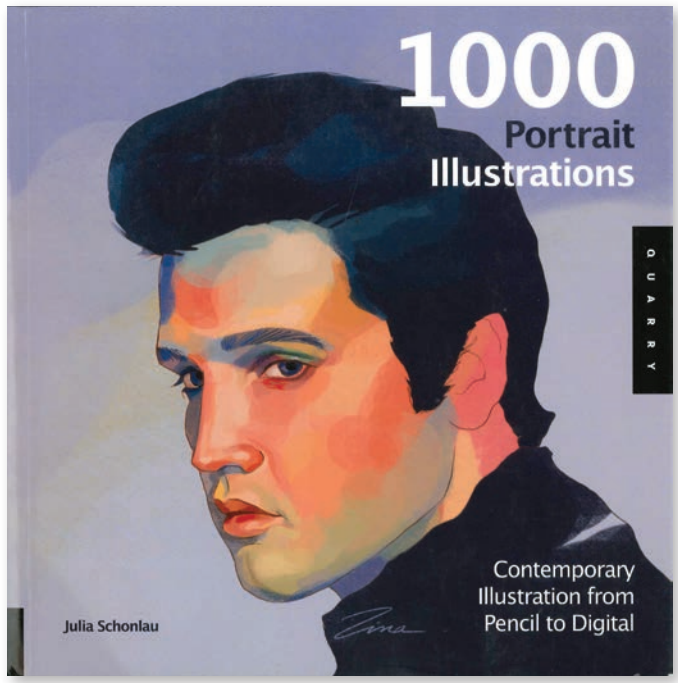


Carnival of Feltmaking

Easy Techniques and 26 Colorful Projects for you and your home

By Gillian Harris

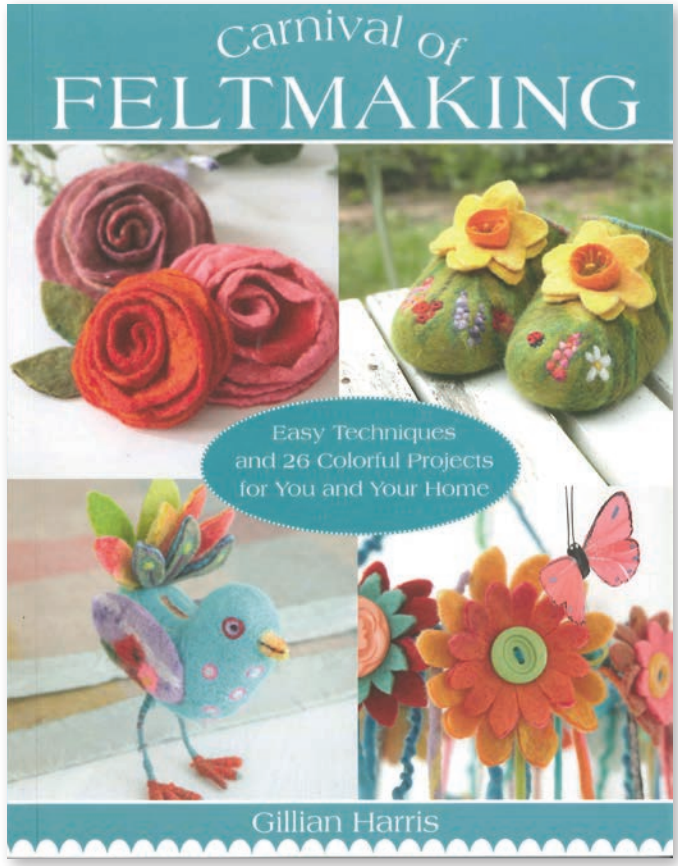
St. Martin's Griffin, 2013

144 pp., Paperback

$22.99

Review by Barbara Delaney

Carnival of Feltmaking is a colorful and inspiring adventure. With projects for everything from wearables like slippers, a hat, or scarf, to accessories for your home and pet, you will not be disappointed. The Technique section offers tips for your workspace; information on felting tools, wet, 3-D, and needle felting; and plenty more. Templates, a glossary, and resources complete the book. Harris has assembled lots of information and a wonderful selection of projects that will surely entice readers to try or get back to feltmaking.



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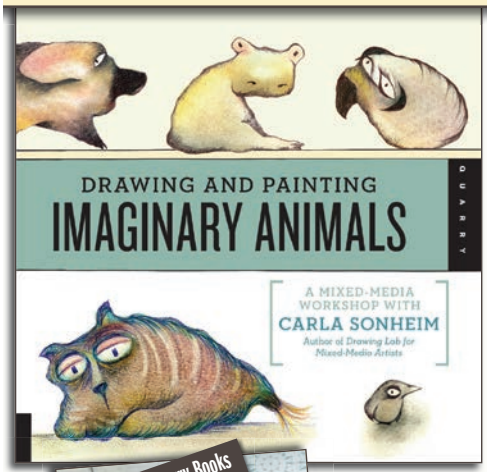

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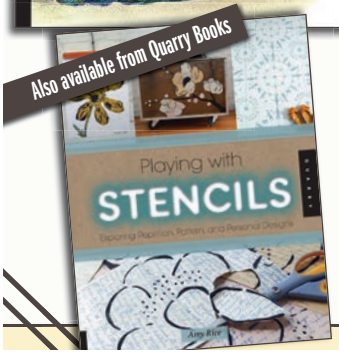

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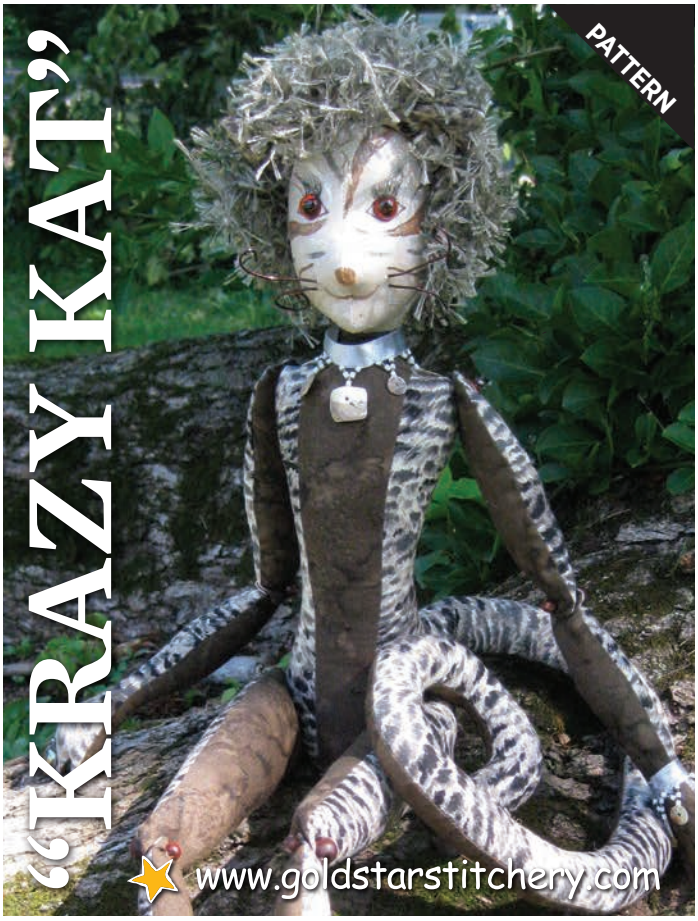

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a look at . . . hanging YOUR art

You have a blank wall and a stack of art—now you've got to figure out how to get that art on the wall. Being organized is the quickest way to get your new gallery installed. We suggest keeping a small bin handy with a few essential art-hanging tools. *(Figure 1)*

HAMMER While a large hammer that fits your grip is generally the best bet when choosing this handy tool, for art hanging purposes, a dainty little hammer will fit the bill—and the bin.

AWL If you have a book-binding awl, keep it out of this kit. You're looking for a larger awl from a hardware store. A vintage ice pick would work as well.

LEVEL No need for a large level in this kit. A tiny level will keep your art straight.

TAPE MEASURE You'll need this for wiring your art and hanging it.

WIRE CUTTERS Nothing fancy needed here—if they cut, they qualify.

HOOKS AND NAILS Any standard picture-hanging nail will do, but we like OOK® hooks and nails. They will work in drywall and plaster and are easy to remove. We also like 3M Command™ hooks because they adhere to the wall without

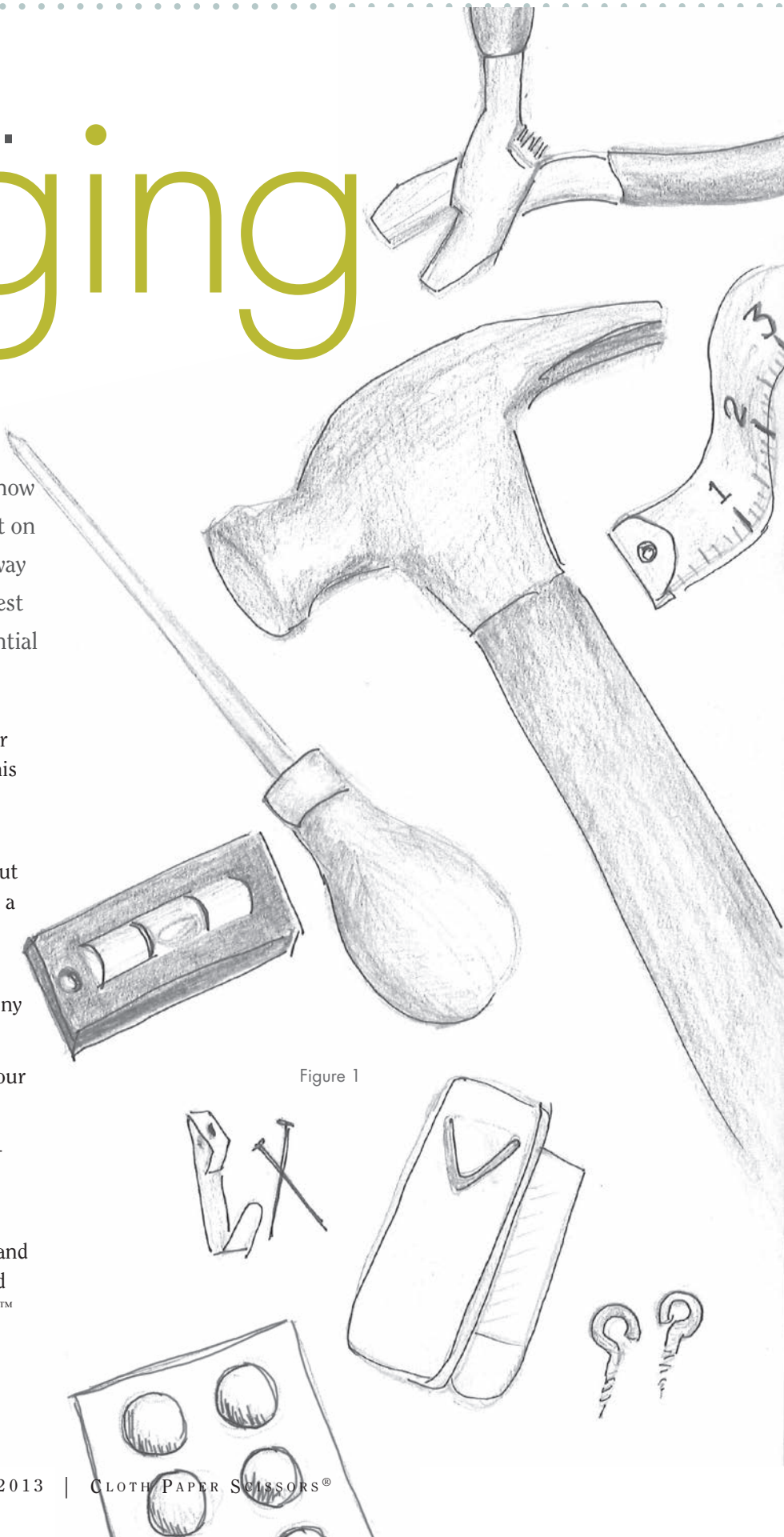

Figure 1

needing a hole and come off without damaging the paint. These are especially great for temporary art shows.

SCREW EYES Smaller is better. Some people prefer D-rings, but then you would need to add a screwdriver to your kit as well.

WIRE Picture-hanging wire is what you're looking for. The plastic-coated wire is a little more expensive, but it is easier on the hands.

BUMPS Sometimes called bumpers, these little rubber half spheres are placed on the bottom two corners of the frame to protect the wall and provide air circulation.

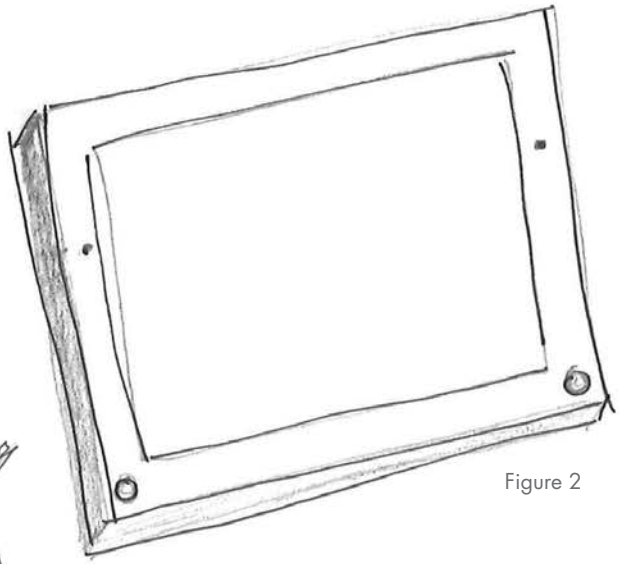

Figure 2

adding wire

1. Place the frame face down on your work surface.
2. Put a rubber bump on each of the bottom two corners of the frame back. *(Figure 2)*
3. Measure ⅓ of the way down from the top of the frame on both sides with the tape measure and use the awl to make a mark in the center of the frame molding at both locations.
4. Screw the screw eyes into the 2 holes, stopping with the eye of the screw parallel to the top of the frame.
5. Cut a piece of picture wire approximately 6" longer than the width of the frame.
6. Insert 3" of the wire through the left screw eye and then loop the short end of the wire back through the screw eye again to create 2 loops of wire around the eye. *(Figure 3)*
7. Pull both ends of the wire towards the center of the frame to tighten, and then wrap the shorter wire in a tight coil around the longer wire. *(Figure 4)*
8. Repeat on the other side.

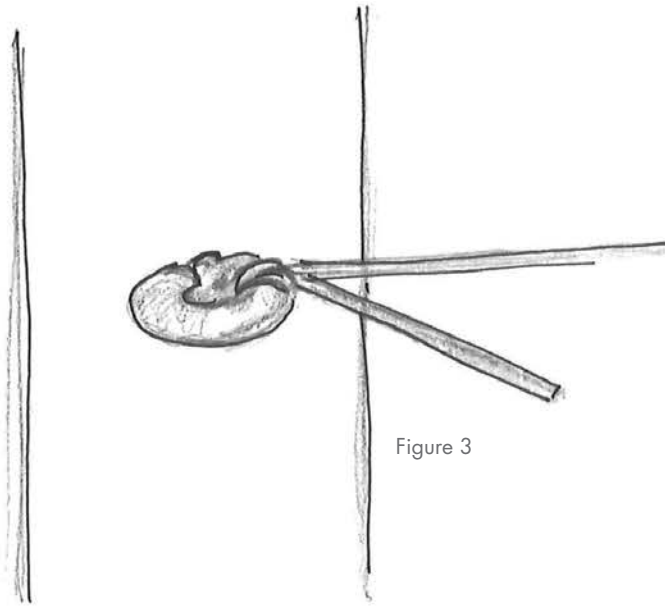

Figure 3

Figure 4

hanging art

1. With the artwork face down on the work surface, pull the wire up toward the top of the frame and measure the distance from the wire to the top edge of the frame. *(Figure 5)*
2. Hold the art on the wall where you'd like it to hang and make a light pencil mark on the wall at the midpoint at the top of the frame.
3. Remove the frame and measure down the distance you determined in the first step and make a mark on the wall. This is where the hanger or hook should go.

tip: When hanging art, make sure to see what the approved weight is for the hook you will be using and make adjustments if necessary. Also, pay attention to the location of the studs in the wall. You will need to use a drywall anchor if heavier art is not positioned/hung over a stud.

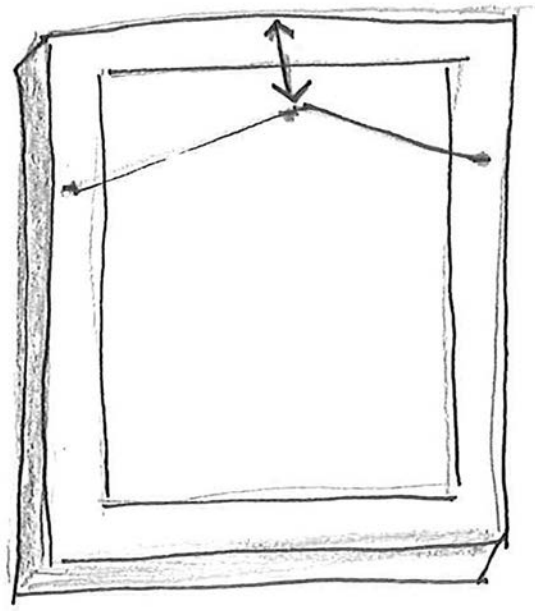

Figure 5

hanging multiple pieces

1. Use paper grocery bags to make a template for each piece of art by tracing around the perimeter of the piece. Make sure to measure the distance from the top of the frame to the wire when the wire is pulled up. Transfer this placement to the paper template with a pencil and poke a hole through the mark with the awl.
2. Use artist's tape or painter's tape to hang the templates on the wall. Rearrange the templates until you're satisfied with the layout, and then make a mark through the hole with a pencil. *(Figure 6)*
3. Remove the paper and hang the proper hook at each mark. Display your artwork and enjoy your gallery!

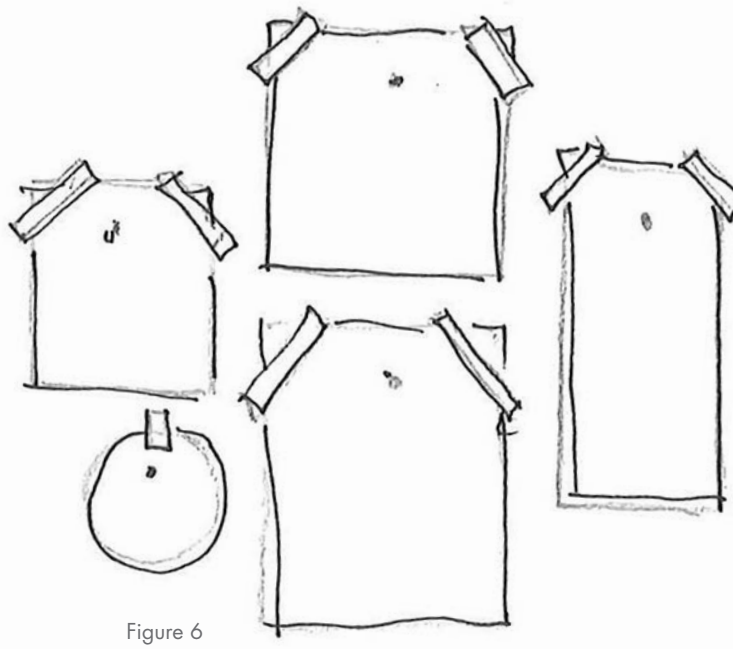

Figure 6

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GETTING technical

The Clone Stamp Tool: A retouching powerhouse

BY nikki smith

After

Photos by Nikki Smith

Before

The Clone Stamp Tool is used to retouch photos by copying pixels from one part of a photo to another. This enables you to repair torn photos, cover up blemishes, and remove unwanted elements in the background of a photo, like telephone poles and power lines. If you are feeling mischievous, you can even swap heads in family portraits. Take your time with this powerful tool, and it will serve you well.

1. Open the image in Photoshop® Elements. As a first step, prior to cloning, go to **Layer > Duplicate Layer** in the menu bar. Label the layer "Cloning Layer" and click **OK**. Having the original photo available on another layer enables you to restore any part of the image to the original version if needed.
2. Click on the **Clone Stamp Tool** in the toolbar. *(Figure 1)*

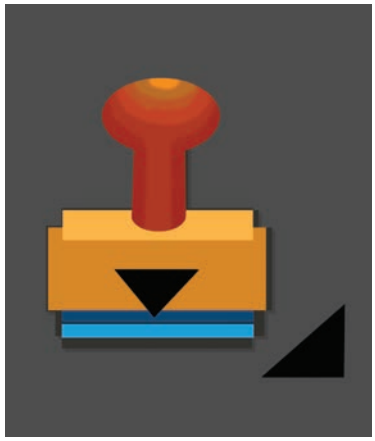

Figure 1

3. In the **options panel** at the top, select a small- to medium-sized round, soft brush for best results. *(Figure 2)* A soft brush helps the cloned area blend in smoothly. *(Figure 3)* The default settings are fine for the other options: **Blending Mode** should be set to **Normal**, the **Opacity** to 100, **Aligned** should be checked, and **Sample All Layers** should be unchecked. *(Figure 2)*

4. Hold down the **Alt key** (on a PC) or the **Option key** (on a Mac) and click on an area of the photo you wish to copy from (the source). The cursor will temporarily change to a crosshair. *(Figure 4)*

5. Next, go to the area of the photo you would like to correct or replace and click and drag the cursor to paint.

Figure 4

tip: Take your time. When doing a large region, clone a small section at a time, selecting a new source location often (repeat steps 4 and 5). For your photo to look natural, refrain from sampling the same source area to avoid obvious repeating patterns. *(Figure 5)* If you make a mistake, press **Ctrl** and the **Z** key to undo your last action, or use the **Undo History** window to step backwards by clicking on an earlier step.

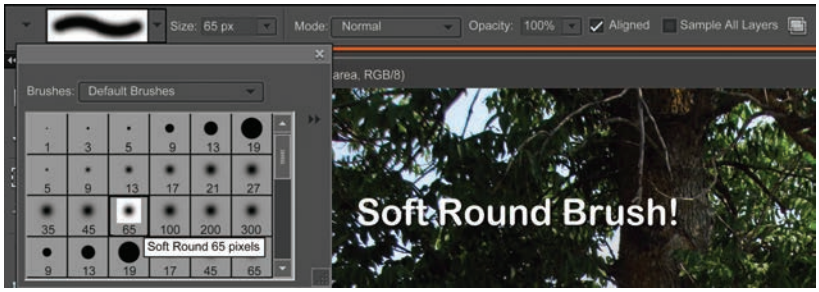

Figure 2

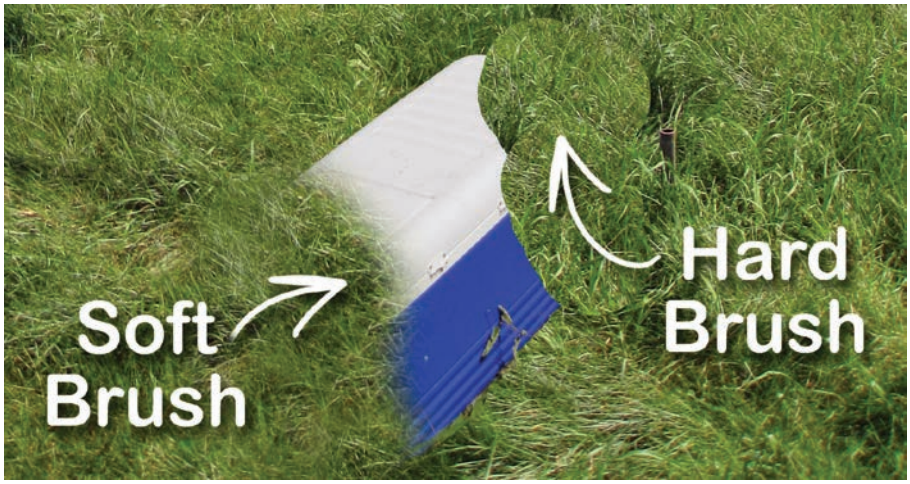

Figure 3

Figure 5

6. Save your finished image with a new file name.

note: For sensitive areas like faces, follow the same steps above except pick the Healing Brush when doing a large section or the Spot Healing Brush for a smaller section instead of the Clone Stamp Tool. The Spot Healing Brush does not require a source. *(Figure 6)*

Master these versatile cloning tools and you can retouch just about any photo like a professional.

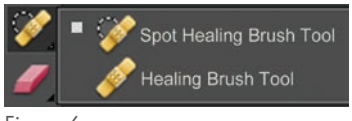

Figure 6

ARTISTS GIVE BACK

BY elena lai etcheverry

When tragedy strikes do you find yourself asking, "What can I do?" As artists we have special opportunities to make a difference using our creative gifts. And that is just what the volunteers of Art Miles Mural Project (AMMP) did when tragedy struck in Newtown, Connecticut.

If you would like to nominate a charity that is doing mixed-media art for a good cause, please email me at **Elena@CharityWings.org**.

THE ART MILES

The Art Miles Mural Project is a movement that combines the efforts of adults and children worldwide to promote peace and harmony. Every hand and every mural aims to create and express a global voice to develop and advocate art rather than violence.

Two days after the Newtown tragedy artist Marilyn Huerta and Art Miles founder Joanne Tawfilis put the word out to the local art community and schools that they wanted to make 10 murals on canvas to send to Sandy Hook Elementary School. The community immediately went into action with California State University San Marcos, Discovery Elementary School, and several other schools contributing canvases created by their students.

On Thursday, December 26th, 2012, the Twin Oaks Gallery and Frame Shop in San Marcos, California, opened their studio to the public, inviting people to participate in the creation of six more canvases with the guidance of several local artists. One of the largest canvases brought to the gallery, "Snowflakes for Sandy Hook," was started by San Marcos High School students on the last day of their final exams. It was amazing how many students stopped by to paint a snowflake on the canvas when they could have easily just left to start their winter break.

These kinds of events take just a little effort to put on, and anyone with a passion for a cause can be successful. Creativity stirs the soul. It connects us in a way that is different than anything else because, although art is subjective, the feeling that goes into every artful gesture is soulful and meaningful and can be appreciated by most everyone—especially when it is for a good cause.

To date the Art Miles Mural Project has created more than 4200 murals around the world.

artmiles.org

Photo by Elena Lai Etcheverry

Photo by Joanne Tawfilis

Storyboxes by Leilani Pierson

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THE mixed-media METALsmith

metal stamps

BY jen cushman

Let's talk about metal stamps. A good set of metal alphabet stamps in carbon steel will have you personalizing your metal jewelry like a pro in no time. It's super simple to stamp a name or word into a premade metal blank, punch a quick hole, add a jump ring, and experience near instant gratification metalsmithing! Want to step it up a notch? Use letters in repeating patterns, such as o for circles or x for cross hatches.

Photos by Jen Cushman

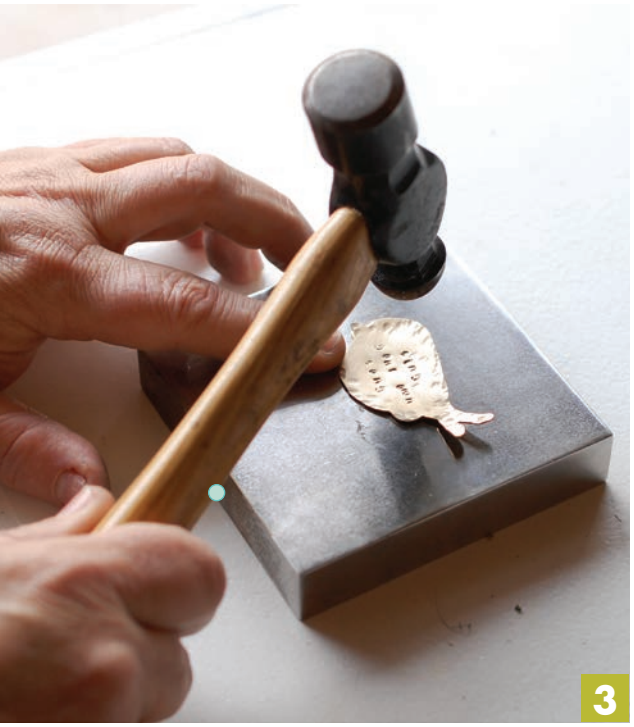
MATERIALS

- Alphabet stamps (I use ImpressArt® metal stamps from impressart.com.)
- Brass blanks (I used Susan Lenart Kazmer Media Mixage by Spellbinders™.)
- Steel bench block
- Hammer, ball peen
- Acrylic paint or Sharpie® marker
- Paper towels or steel wool, fine
- Metal hole punch (I use Eurotool® Europunch from jewelrytools.com.)
- Jump rings, 10 mm
- Flat-nose pliers, 2
- Neck cord with finished clasps (I used a leather one from firemountaingems.com.)

directions

1. Pick a name or a word from the metal alphabet stamp set and put the letters aside on your work surface.
2. Place the metal blank on the steel bench block, ensuring the block sits flat on a sturdy work surface such as a wooden table. *(Figure 1)*

tip: *A steel bench block is the hardest surface you can have for metalworking. Using a bench block helps your tools to work properly and last longer. Because the hammer is not able to sink into the steel, when the carbon steel tip hits the metal blank the metal moves up and over the tip, leaving a nice deep impression.*



3. Hold the first letter stamp in your non-dominant hand and rest the heel of your hand and pinky finger on the bench block for additional support. Hold the flat head of the hammer in your dominant hand and swiftly and forcibly hit the top of the alphabet stamp on its center. Continue until you've completed your word. *(Figure 2)*

4. Add some additional texture to your metal blank with the ball head of the hammer by gently dimpling the edges of the metal blank. *(Figure 3)*

5. Fill in the impressions of the letters as well as the texture marks using paint *(Figure 4)* or a fine-tip Sharpie marker.

note: Traditional metalsmiths would use a darkening patina to oxidize the metal, but a fun mixed-media alternative is to use markers or paint.

6. Use a piece of paper towel to rub any excess paint from the metal, leaving color in the divots and stamped letters only. *(Figure 5)* Alternatively, buff highlights in the metal with the steel wool if you added color with the Sharpie marker.

7. Punch a hole near the top center of the metal blank with the metal hole punch. *(Figure 6)*

8. Use the flat-nose pliers to thread a jump ring through the hole and then close the jump ring onto a leather neck cord. *(Figure 7)*

BY julie fei-fan balzer

BLOCKED

I love being a full-time artist. I feel so lucky and grateful to be able to make my living doing something that makes me so very happy. That said, I do cross swords with my old enemy, the deadline, quite often.

I appreciate deadlines. Without them I'm pretty sure everything would get done "tomorrow." I also *hate* deadlines. They create a panicky situation in which I am forced to be creative on-demand.

In my experience, when being creative while up against a deadline, I typically run into three major problems:

1. No mojo
2. No time
3. I hate the ingredients

The Problem: *No mojo*

As much as people make fun of artists for needing to "feel the spirit," I do believe that quality artwork is a combination of discipline and mojo. Mojo, however, is an elusive thing, as difficult to capture as a photo of Big Foot. But, with a bit of discipline, I have discovered that you can lay a trap and lure it your way.

- **Just start doing something**. In the movie "Finding Forrester," Sean Connery's character tells a young writer with writer's block to just start typing. He gives him his own story to start copying and tells him that eventually his own words will start to come. The important thing is just to start typing. I think the same is true for arting. Even when you don't feel like it and have no idea where you're going to go with it, just start doing. Eventually, the action of doing art will open your mind to something exciting. This is the essence of why I force myself to create something every single day. Discipline begets mojo.
- **Make something bad.** I give you permission to make something bad. In fact, aim for the most hideous thing you can possibly make. You just might love it. Mojo is perverse like that—it abandons you when you most want it and then comes sniffing around once you decide to leap.
- **Do something else.** Even though there's a deadline, walk away. Go for a walk, make a cup of tea, call a friend, hop up and down on one foot—anything to get your mind out of the must-create mode. Pressure generally equals fear, which usually equals lower quality work. So take the pressure away and you might just find some mojo along the way!

The Problem: *No time*

We live in a culture in which being busy is the greatest good of all. If you're not hysterically busy at all times you must be living a totally unfulfilled life. Or perhaps that's simply the culture I'm immersed in as I sit and write this from my apartment in midtown Manhattan. Nobody seems to have any time anymore. All these devices (from the washing machine to the microwave to the iPhone) were supposed to make things so much easier and faster, weren't they? And yet, none of us have any free time. What's the solution when a deadline is looming and there simply isn't enough time to invent a time machine?

- **Copy yourself.** There's no shame in recycling a good idea. Some artists have had mighty good careers based on a single idea recycled over and over. If you're stretched for time, go back to a piece of art you love and dissect why it's awesome. Then go ahead and copy those parts of it, while allowing new ideas, impulses, and/or supplies into the mix.
- **Think high impact.** A lack of time means you have to go to a triage system: What is the most important thing to do right now? Go for the things that are going to have a big impact in your artwork. For example, as beautiful as tiny little hand stitches may be on a piece of art, I can get a lot more bang for my hour with machine stitching and a scattering of shiny beads.
- **Recycle.** I like to work in layers. But layers take lots of time . . . unless you cheat. I often layer an old painting, quilt, or bit of artwork into a new art project. I did the work of creating the layers years ago and I'm taking advantage of them now. This is a

great reason to make lots of papers, tags, and other artistic "chicken stock" whenever you can. You never know when you'll need it.

The Problem: *I hate the ingredients*

Sometimes I am sent supplies to use in a project. Sometimes I hate those supplies. Hate may be extreme, but confusion as to what to do with a supply can very quickly lead to loathing. And then, there I am, sitting at my desk staring at a supply I loathe while it slowly tortures me with its very presence on my work surface, all while a deadline looms. I don't know why there isn't more violence in my studio. Actually, I do. I have found a way to turn hate into love—or at least into acceptance.

- **Find the love.** My background is in theatre. When playing a villain, you have to discover why that villain is likeable and sympathetic. You have to learn to love and understand his evil-ness. When working with a supply you don't love, find just one thing you like about it and run towards that.
- **Think like a marketer.** The best marketers turn negatives into positives. Look at the product you're working with and figure out a way to turn what you loathe about it into the strongest and best thing about it. It isn't waterproof? Awesome. It isn't waterproof! Look how much you can do with it because it's water reactive!
- **Listen to Tim Gunn.** On "Project Runway," Tim Gunn's famous workroom motivation line is, "Make it work." You don't have a choice, as this project has to come together with these given supplies. Instead of fighting it, embrace the problem and let it lead you somewhere new and unexpected. Once you get there, use an editing eye, but don't fight the journey.

While it's true that not all of us have looming deadlines, I think we can all agree that we only have a certain amount of creative time on any given day, and we want to put that time to the best possible use. When you're stuck, try out one of these methods for finding your mojo, making the best of the time you have, and learning to love what you have to work with.

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a conversation with . . .

chad alice hagen

WITH editor jenn mason, assistant editor barbara delaney, and lucky reader indira govindan

Chad Alice Hagen is a full-time artist, well known for her work with felt and bookmaking. Chad has worked with hand-felted wool for more than 35 years and is the author of three books about feltmaking. We were very excited to learn more about Chad, her processes, and her love of bookmaking

Photos by Chad Alice Hagen

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The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding by J.A. Szirmai

Our conversation . . .

Indira: Why did you choose to be a bookmaker?

Chad: I have always wanted to be a bookmaker (and also a Navy Seal, but that ship has sailed). I have always been around books, having learned to read very early. I have worked in bookstores and libraries, and I collect signed, first editions of Southern writers. I used to sell books on Amazon and I have written three books for Lark. I think it was just a matter of time before I went over to that "dark" side.

Jenn: What part of the bookmaking process intrigues you the most?

Chad: The whole fabulous historical subject! My joy in making books is learning to recreate historical bindings from early Coptic and Ethiopian books through the medieval period. Sometimes when I am learning a new binding and am deep into the space where the creative juices are just flowing, I suddenly feel like I have done this structure before, almost "remembering" it from a former lifetime. I know that may sound like I'm having a flash back to the '60s but it's a real, very strange feeling. The last time it happened, I asked my teacher who was working close-by, if he had ever had those feelings/memories come upon him. He didn't even look

up from his work but said under his breath, “all the time.”

I also like to work with “limp” bindings, not the regular hard bindings most people think of when they think of books. Limp bindings seem to lend themselves to my own work with resist dyed felt, handmade paper, and recycled textiles to create something new.

Barb: Do you have a favorite binding? If so, what makes it your favorite?

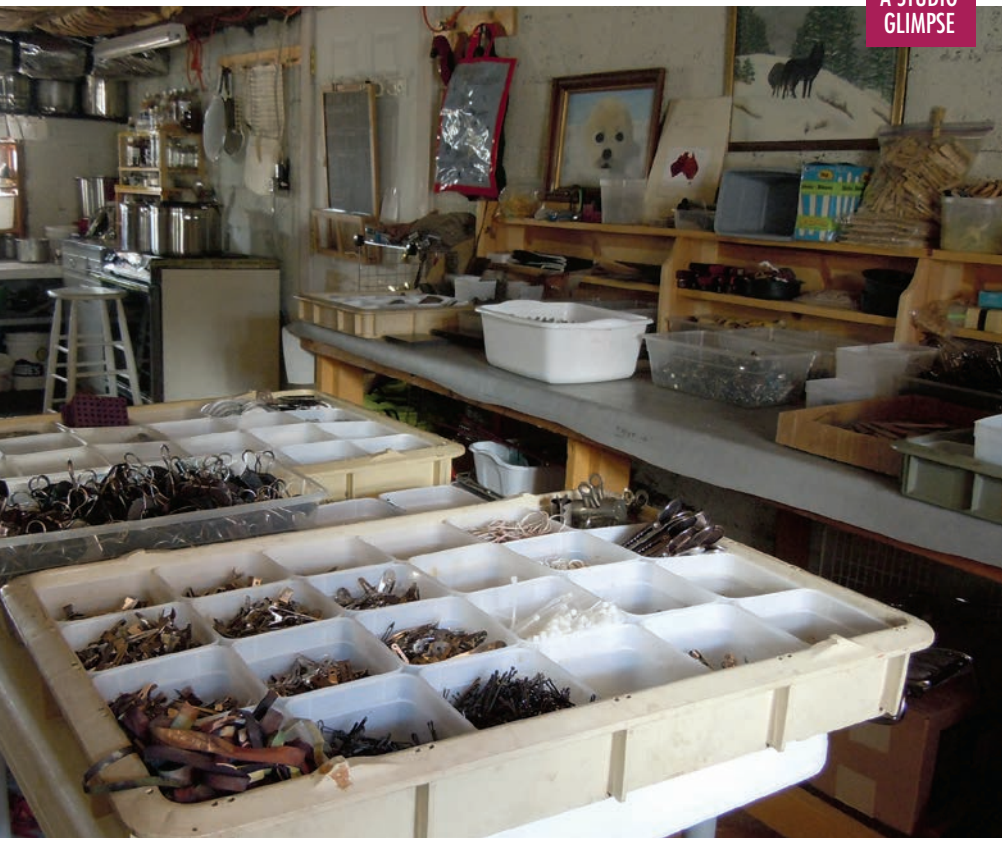
Chad: I am in love, absolutely in love with all exposed bindings, and every single long stitch I can figure out or invent. Keith Smith’s books are an utter goldmine of information and ideas. Currently my favorite is the Nag Hammadi tacket binding.

Jenn: When I make handmade books, I have difficulty making the first mark inside—I seem to have trouble finding something worthy to put inside. Do

ON MY WORK TABLE

Above: Dry studio for bookmaking
Below: Wet studio for dyeing

A STUDIO GLIMPSE



you have any problems using your own beautiful books?

Chad: I fancy myself a writer so it is hard to *not* write in a book. My problem is whenever I start doing a little spring cleaning, I find dozens of my journals—all half started with all the greatest intentions. But beyond the first 10 pages, most of the book remains empty. I'm starting to take those books apart, stapling the written pages together (if they are worth saving), and tossing them into a box marked "for my autobiography." Then I recycle the rest of the signatures into a new journal.

Another problem I have is that I want to have one handmade book for my personal journal, one for an art notebook for ideas, one that I take on travels, one for non-art household ideas like "repair the chimney," and one for . . . you get the idea. Then I lose the one I need at just the wrong moment and consequently forget the greatest idea in the world for lack of the proper book to put it in.

When I travel, which I do a lot of for teaching, I really can't bring all those

different journals in my carry-on. I recently learned that the great journal writer and bookmaker, Gwen Diehn, just writes in one journal at a time and *everything* goes into it. Seeing all her journals in a bookshelf is like a complete novel of her life. Everything is there; nothing lost.

I tried that idea when I was in Holland recently and I found it very easy. It was a relief to write and glue and draw everything in just one book. I also have special project journals, where everything about a particular project is recorded.

Jenn: I'm totally inspired by this answer. Have you ever considered making a book that had one signature for each of your journal types for ease in carrying that could be easily dismantled and rebound into category-specific books when they were full?

Chad: Yes, I have been thinking about that and have some great ideas I'm going to put into experimental practice asap. (Hint—it has to do with Tackets.)

Barb: Why felt? How did felt become your substrate of choice?

Chad: I fell in love with hand-felted wool around 1977 when I returned to school and took a class in "Our Friends the Fibers." A woman gave a demonstration on feltmaking she had learned in Sweden and I was fascinated by the transformation from fuzz to coherent fabric. It was like magic. When I started to dye those fuzzy fibers and saw the depth of color that was possible, I was hooked for life. I sold my loom and started my exploration to see how I could change the surface of hand-felted wool with color.

Around 1990, I was given a Fulbright to teach feltmaking in New Zealand and it was there that I started to dye the Merino wool with resist tools. When I returned home, I continued that study using only Merino wool so I could felt very thin felts, folding and clamping the wool with the growing assortment of strange tools I was acquiring.

Barb: What is the strangest item you have ever used in clamping the felt for dyeing?

Chad: I asked my students that question and they came to the conclusion that all the tools were strange as they are all adapted from various everyday uses. But then we decided that using the "petals" from a veggie steamer would win the prize, as everyone has one yet no one can identify its marks on felt when used in the resist process.

Jenn: You seem to spend as much time learning as you do teaching. Do you prefer to do one more than the other? Why?

Chad: I need to do both. How could I teach if I wasn't excited about learning myself? Having the time and means to attend someone's workshop is such a gift. It is a joy to relax, and I find my teaching mind totally concentrating on making. And as much as I just want to stay in "beginner's mind" while taking the class, I do notice how different teachers approach teaching a difficult/advanced subject, and I cover the margins of my notebook with thoughts on both how I can improve my own teaching and ideas for transforming what I am learning into a project to which I can add my textile experiences.

I also find it very healthy to learn about things totally outside of my textile/book field. It's not that I want to become a potter or dig up my backyard and re-landscape or fix my leaking sink, but learning about different techniques teaches me something about problem solving. Training my brain to think logically helps when the creative mind gets bogged down in how-the-heck-do-I-do-that mode.

Indira: You teach both in the U.S. and in Europe. Do you find teaching in Europe different from teaching in the U.S.?

Chad: Because the travel, landscape, languages, cultures, and foods are different, I enjoy teaching in Europe. In the early days of contemporary feltmaking, I found that Europeans weren't bogged down by the old art vs. craft questions and were creating fabulous objects. They continue that tradition, inspiring me every time I see new work.

Jenn: Very interesting. We run into the issue of art vs. craft all the time. What are your feelings on this sometimes controversial topic?

Chad: Oh, an artistic and well-crafted can of worms. Sometimes it would take a book to write everything I have thought about this subject in the past, and sometimes I just boil it down to economics. If people are willing to spend big money on an object, they will call it Art. And if they come by your booth and discuss how their grandma made the same things and just gave them away, most likely they think you are making Craft. But in reality, I think for the artist, it comes down to the conversation you have in your head when designing and creating an object. And that conversation involves respect and skill for the material, knowledge of the history the maker is part of, and the creation of something new.

Barb: I read that you are transitioning to a new substrate: paper. Do you feel you've exhausted the creative possibilities of felt right now, or have the possibilities of paper as a substrate seduced you?

Chad: Oh no. I don't think I could ever exhaust the possibilities of resist dyeing and I don't feel like I'm jumping ship to work with paper and books. It is a natural progression for me. I'm not giving up one to work with the other. I have, in the past, worried about moving to a new media. Would I have to start from the bottom and work my way up for years? An artist friend of mine listened to my worries and said, "You are an artist, not just a feltmaker or dyer. Use whatever you need to keep yourself interested in your work."

Barb: Books, brooches, stitched and beaded pieces: Is there more to your felt experiments? Will we see similar pieces with your papers?

Chad: Only my cat knows! I find the biggest thing that stops my creativity is trying to figure out what is going to happen next. I try to maintain that strange little conversation between myself and the material and pay attention to what I am doing. I try not to judge what happens when I sit at my desk and play with the papers and fabrics that I find accumulated there. I like to surprise myself. As Anne Lamott writes, "Do it bird by bird." I do it one step at a time.

Indira: Are you planning to write another book?

Chad: Yes, I am working on a book now about my work with dyeing hand-felted wool with resist techniques. It will be a self-published and printed art book, featuring lino-cut illustrations of my favorite tools, dyepot color samples, letterpress text of why and how I developed the resist techniques on felt over the past 30 some years, and I plan to hand bind it with the resist-dyed felt. My thoughts are to create a limited number of the art-book version and then a commercially printed and bound copy.

I have taught my resist dyeing on handfelted wool workshop to hundreds of students so I don't want to do another how-to book. Once people learn the basics of the felting, dyeing, and mark making, they want to continue using this technique. I believe it is very important that they really think of how it can be combined with their own work. The resist marks have become identified with my research and work over the last 20 years, so it is a worthwhile challenge for anyone to take that information and make it their own.

Dyed and stitched felt

Jenn: What a fantastic idea! What do you think your biggest challenge will be to finish this book—besides time, of course?

Chad: The challenge will be learning all the bits that will go into it all. It is ambitious, but I am excited about the process and how it really will change my ways of working. (Yikes! Content in a book? Learning how to do letterpress? Carving and printing my images? Distribution? Breathing?)

Indira: What makes you happy and fulfilled as an artist?

Chad: Continuing to do what I love to do: Being excited about learning new things. I own the roof over my head and I have a big grey cat. Teaching workshops means I get to travel and, as a result, I have wonderful friends all over the world. I try to eat healthy and walk/run every other day in order to be able to keep traveling and be thrilled and happy working in the studio 10 hours a day. This is my life.

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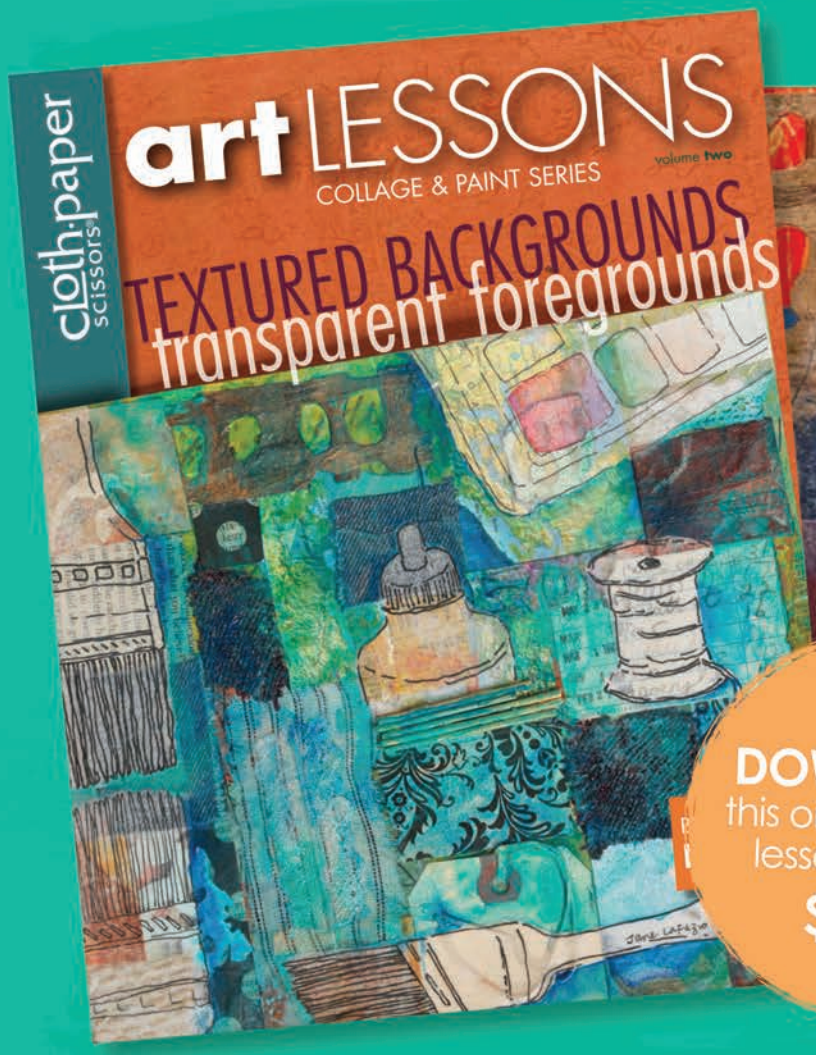

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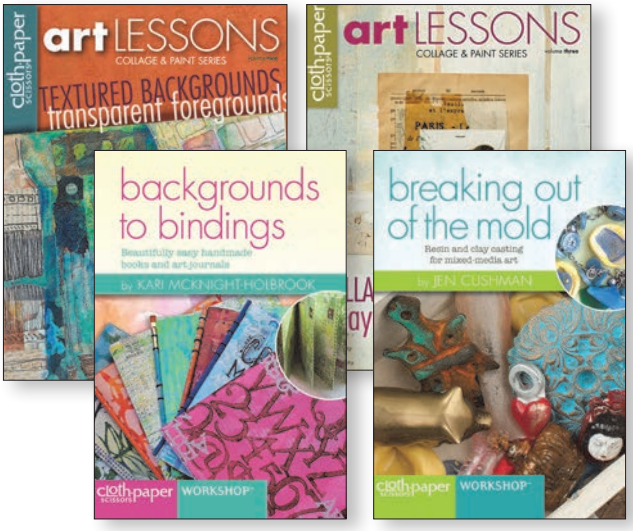

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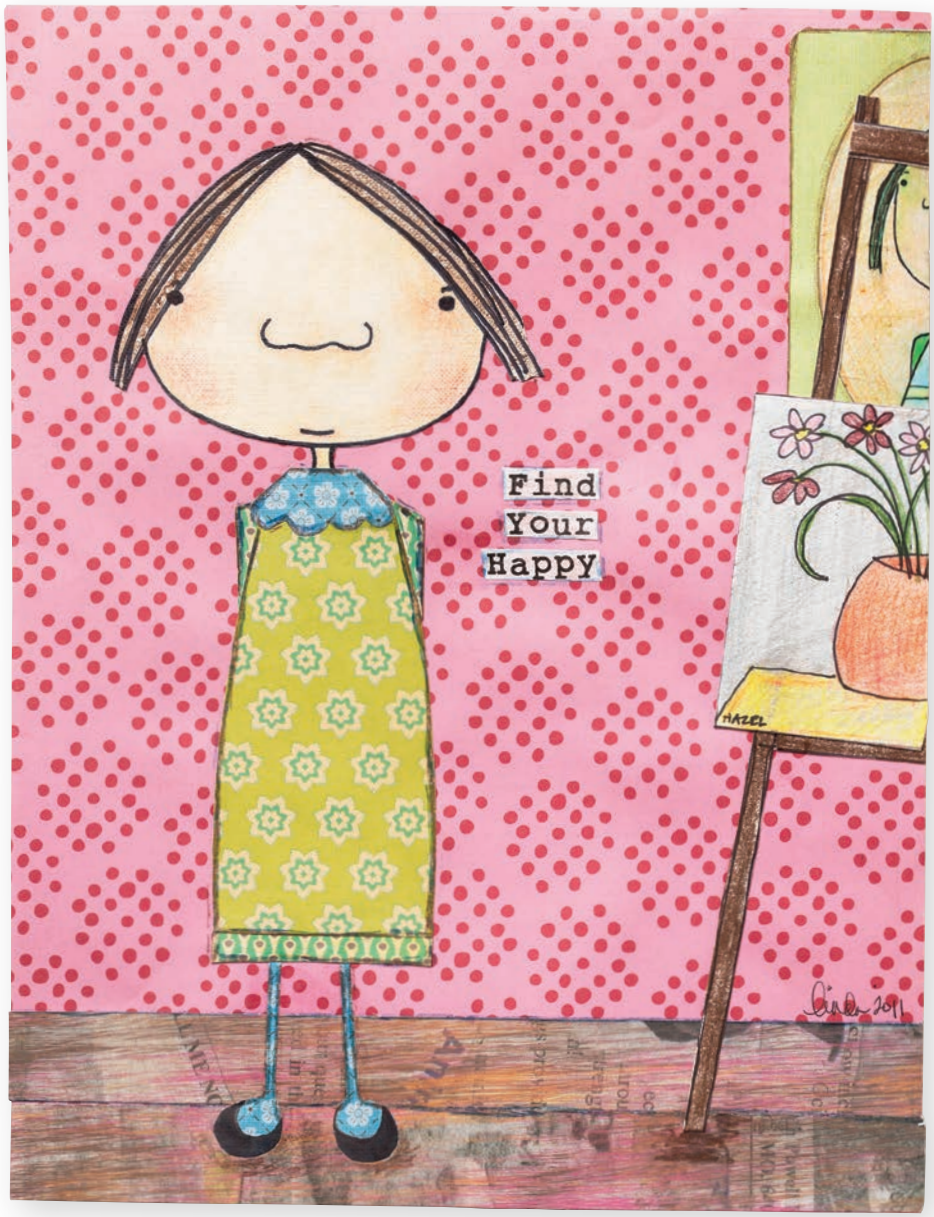
INTERWEAVE

meet hazel...

BY linda peterson



I have been creating art for as long as I can remember. I've enjoyed the freedom of painting abstracts and the discipline of drawing pastel portraits, the primordial pleasure of making mud into ceramics, and the fine detail of creating jewelry. Some years back, I even opened a membership-based art studio. It was a place to provide "artists-with-another-job" an affordable community studio; a place that allowed them to create beyond their kitchens and basements in the company of other artists. Sadly, when the economy took a down-turn, I was forced to close the business.

Shortly thereafter, my family and I moved from the Midwest to the West Coast. It was during this period of missing my old life and friends that I fell in love with mixed media. I devoured mixed-media art magazines, books, and blogs. I spent hours watching artists create wonders in YouTube videos. I couldn't get enough. My

Quote by Erica Jong

mind raced. As the ideas popped into my head, I would sketch pages and pages in my art journal, all the while thinking of the next piece that I wanted to create.

I used to be an avid scrapbooker. One day, I looked at all of the scrapbooking supplies gathering dust in the garage (that I had insisted we lug across the country!) and I was inspired.

So, let me introduce you to Hazel. Hazel was born of my emotional need to make sense of where I was as an individual, express my artistic creativity, and bridge my past (both literally and figuratively) with my present. She is a very smart and intelligent girl, young enough to believe in the goodness of the world but wise enough to know that there are bumps in the road. She is both naïve and wise beyond her years. Her reflections are meant not to preach, but to offer comfort, a smile, or just the recognition that our feelings are often universal.

As I pictured an old soul with young ideas, I envisioned a very simple girl in old-fashioned patterned dresses and knew that my mounds of scrapbook paper would do the trick.

Usually, I start with a quote, a reflection, or even just a word in mind. With that, I envision what Hazel might be doing to express that idea. I then start "assembling," painting her face first, drawing her body next—hand cutting all of the pieces out of paper. Once that is complete, I choose the background papers. Sometimes I use a solid background with just one piece of patterned paper, other times the background is a collage of papers. Often, paint is added. When the background is finished, I add Hazel and the message.

Hazel always seems to cheer me up, even long after the creative process has been completed. As she would say, she helps me Find My Happy. I hope she does the same for you.

Linda Peterson is the circulation manager for a small newspaper by day and a mixed-media artist by night, living with her family in Northern California.

www.myartmylifeme.blogspot.com
www.dearhazel.etsy.com

springy plaster birds

BY renee rogers

The idea for these springy birds sitting on a wire flew to mind one summer day. I love birds. They captivate my imagination in winged flight. Ah, the freedom to fly with such balance and beauty. Victor Hugo said it best, "Be as a bird perched on a frail branch that she feels bending beneath her, still she sings away all the same, knowing she has wings." In this case the singing bird is perched on a springy wire with wings spread in flight.

MATERIALS

- Aluminum foil
- Scissors
- Plaster gause (I use Paris Craft.)
- A container with water
- Plastic wrap or non-stick craft sheet
- Glue, white
- Plate, small
- Tissue or paper napkins
- Paintbrush, small
- Embellishments: buttons, sequins, beads, found text, twisted thread, etc.
- Pins, sewing or sequin
- Wire cutters
- Wire, 16-gauge
- Awl
- Matte medium
- Acrylic paint
- Pen(s) (I used a gold Krylon® leafing pen.)

optional

- Sandpaper

directions

The body

1. Begin with a piece of foil approximately 12" × 6". The actual amount is trial and error because it depends on the size of the bird you want. Press and shape the foil to create the bird body. The foil bird will be bumpy and have voids, and this is okay.
2. Use a separate piece of foil to create the wings, wrapping the foil under and across the top of the bird body. *(Figure 1)*
3. Precut various lengths of the plaster gauze. Smaller strips are easier to work with. I suggest cutting them with scissors about 1" wide and in 2", 3", and 4" lengths. *(Figure 2)*
4. Dip a gauze strip in the container of water and, with the strip over the container of water, smooth the strip with your fingers to reduce the amount of water and to smooth the plaster.

Figure 1

Figure 2

5. Wrap the pieces of gauze around the bird body, covering the foil. Smooth the plaster strips with your fingers to define the shape and fill in any crevices.
6. Use small strips of gauze to wrap around and hold the wings in place. *(Figure 3)*
7. Allow the bird to dry overnight on the piece of plastic wrap or the craft sheet so it doesn't stick.
8. Once dry, check to see that all of the foil is covered with plaster. Add more gauze strips if needed
9. Lightly sand the bird body, if desired, for a smoother finish.

embellishing

Listen to the bird. Is it a fancy bird, a clown bird, a wordy bird, a silly bird? What kind of bird are you holding in your hand?

1. Mix water and glue (1:1) on the plate and use the mixture to apply small, torn strips of tissue paper or napkins to cover the bird. Overlap and smooth the strips to cover the shape.

note: Torn strips will blend better than cut ones.

2. Cover the strips with the glue/water mixture using your fingers or the paintbrush. Usually 1 layer of paper will cover the plaster. Alternatively, the bird could easily be painted instead of covering with tissue paper or napkins. Allow to dry.

tip: I have found it easier to cover half of the bird, allow it to dry, and then finish the rest.

Figure 3

tip: If you find the hole is in the wrong place, no problem. Poke another hole and cover the old hole with a piece of tissue paper.

5. Use small embellishments for the eyes. I used a tiny bit of matte medium to glue them in place.
6. Define the beak with paint and pens.
7. Add more embellishments as desired using matte medium to affix them to the bird. I used a swirl of sheet music to create a nest on the wire for one. Thread waste is another option.

The problem is knowing when to stop! A light touch to the bird will create a springy, swaying movement that I hope will bring a smile to your face.

3. Add buttons, sequins, and beads as desired. The plaster is easy to pierce with straight pins to hold the embellishments. If a straight pin is too long, smaller sequin pins can be used or use the wire cutters to snip part of the pin off.

the spring

1. Cut about 18" of the 16-gauge wire and coil it like an old bed spring. Make larger coils on the bottom, circling smaller and smaller to the top. *(Figure 4)* Make sure the spring sits balanced before adding the bird.
2. Use the awl to poke a hole for the wire in the center of the bottom of the bird.
3. Bend the top 1" of the coil up, perpendicular to the work surface.
4. Stick the wire into the hole in the bird to support the bird. Adjust the wire coil as needed to balance the bird.

Figure 4

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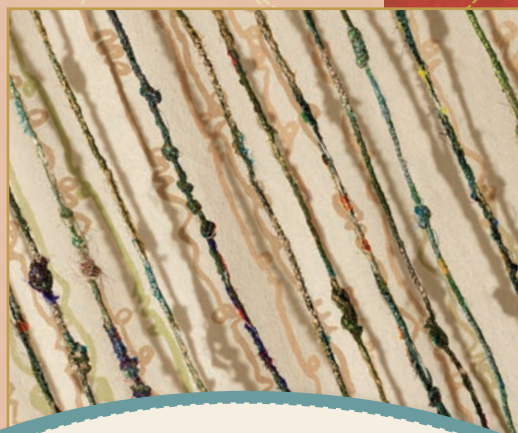

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Clockwise; art by: Susie Monday, Norma Schlager, Janet Lasher, Jill Jensen

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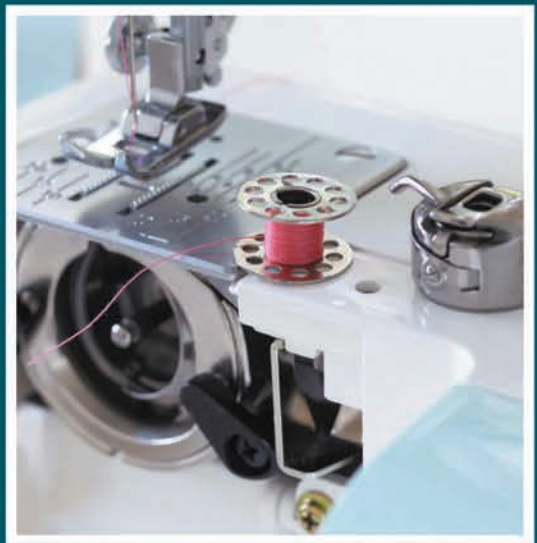

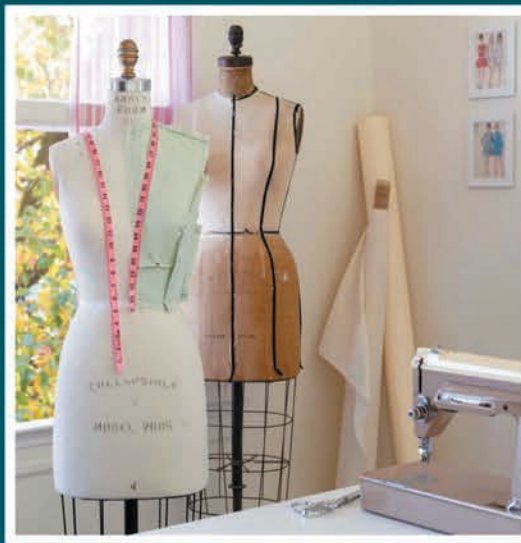

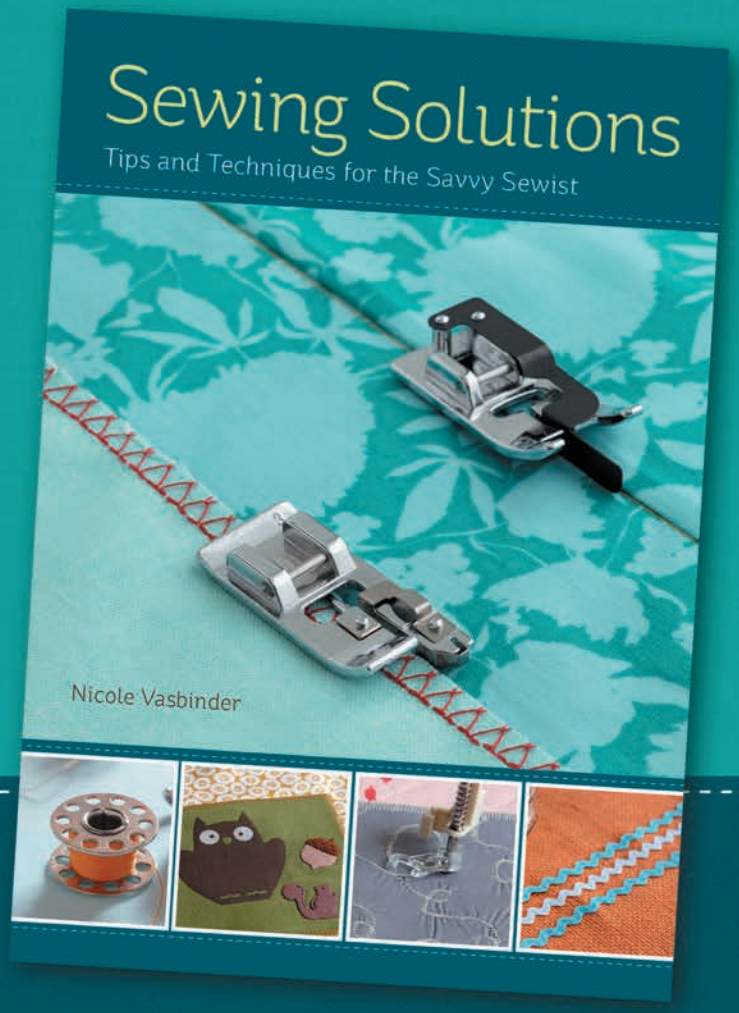

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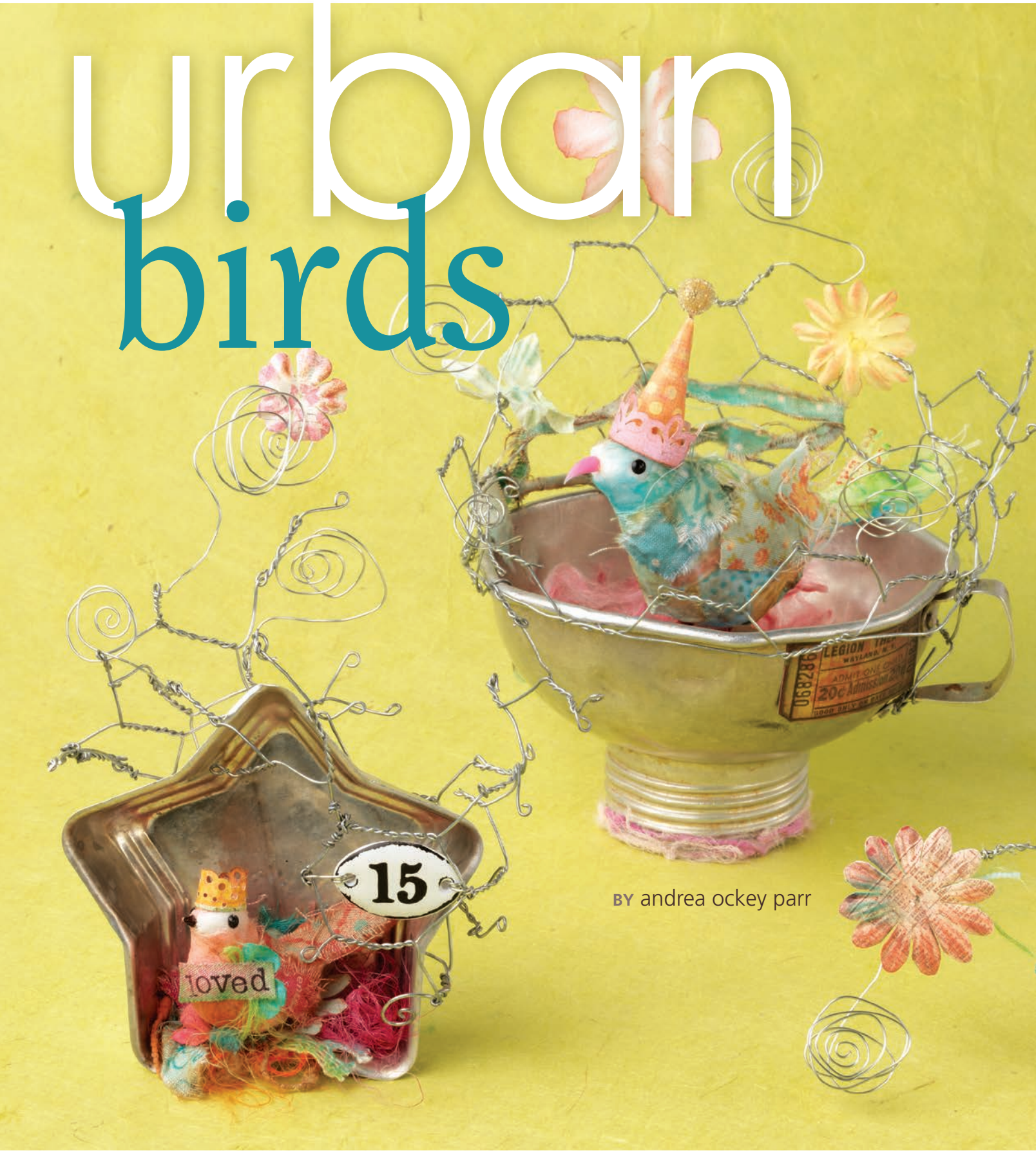
urban birds



BY andrea ockey parr

One trait I've always admired about birds is their resourcefulness. They're able to construct nests almost anywhere and have the uncanny ability to turn any cranny or crevice into a home. With this in mind, I created these Urban Birds: flying friends who've turned discarded city junk into cozy and whimsical abodes. This project is all about assembly and embellishment.

MATERIALS

- Fabric scraps
- Bird
- Make-up sponges
- Tim Holtz® Distress inks™, walnut stain
- Hot glue gun and glue sticks (I have used other glues with success as well.)
- Patterned paper
- Ball embellishment for hat
- Decorative flowers (I used Prima brand.)
- Embellishments: clothing tags, number plaques, receipts, bottle caps, travel stubs, or tickets (The ticket and number plaque I used are from Tim Holtz.)
- Alphabet stamp set (I used EK Success® stamps for the uppercase letters and Studio g for the lowercase.)
- Vintage gelatin mold, metal cup, or other base for the bird's house
- Chicken wire
- Wire cutters
- Needle-nose pliers
- Wire, 18-gauge aluminum (I used OOK® brand wire.)
- Yarn and lace scraps

optional

- Acrylic paint or ink, for antiquing
- Wooden thread spool
- Border edge punch (I used one from Martha Stewart.)

the bird

1. Tear off strips and squares of fabric in colors that correspond to the bird. *(Figure 1)*

tip: To give the bird a more weathered and grungy look, dab a make-up sponge onto the ink pad and then randomly rub the fabric strips with the inked sponge.

2. Cut some fabric scraps into the shape of wings.
3. Attach the wings, fabric strips, and scraps to the bird's body with hot glue. I usually glue the bird's wings to the body and then add the fabric strips.

Figure 1

the hat

1. Roll the patterned paper into a cone shape to fashion a hat and glue it with the glue stick. Add the ball embellishment.

tip: The ball at the top of the hat can be a pin dipped in glitter or a berry from a floral sprig; anything small and round will do the trick.

2. Glue the base of the hat onto the flower to create the hat's brim. I used hot glue for this.
3. If you'd rather give the bird a crown, use a decorative border punch on a strip of paper and curl it into a circular shape.
4. Attach the hat or the crown to the bird's head with hot glue. Set the bird aside.
5. Add more embellishments to the bird as desired. I added a "Fly" banner to one of my birds by stamping the word "Fly" onto a strip of fabric, cutting it into a banner shape, and then gluing it to the hat.

tip: Use this same technique to add any sort of text to your bird, like I did with the "loved" sentiment.

the home

note: Hold the bird up to the base to check proportion. The house shouldn't look too cramped or too spacious.

1. Modify the base as desired. If you don't like the look of shiny metal, you could paint it or antique it with ink.
2. Using the wire cutters, carefully cut a section of chicken wire that is long enough to enclose or

wrap around the back of the base. *(Figure 2)*

3. Snip the hexagon shapes of the chicken wire with the wire cutters and bend them until the desired look is achieved. If the chicken wire looks too dense, cut some sections out entirely.

4. Using the needle-nose pliers, curl in any sharp edges of the chicken wire for safety. *(Figure 3)*

5. Add curly-cues to your chicken wire by making circular swirls with the aluminum wire and wrapping them around the chicken wire. *(Figure 3)*

6. Attach the chicken wire to the base with hot glue. If there is anything on the base (such as a handle) that you can bend the chicken wire around, do so for added stability.

7. Cover up any unsightly mounds of hot glue by gluing lace, trim, ephemera, or flowers on top of the connection points.

8. Add yarn, fabric scraps, and lace as nesting material inside the bottom of the base.

optional: If your bird needs to be elevated, glue the bird to an empty thread spool and then glue the spool into the base. Add nesting materials around the spool.

9. Attach the bird to its new home by wiring or gluing it in place.

My favorite part about this project is the wide range of artistic potential it provides. So much personality can be added to things that are store bought and ready-made. There is no shame in working with objects that already exist and making them your own. If you're

Figure 2

Figure 3

feeling extra ambitious, you can create your own birds from scratch out of clay or cloth. Put your own clever spin on the birds' homes, too.

For me, when I look at these urban birds, my focus is drawn to the chicken wire in particular. Chicken wire is meant to confine, but these little birds appear to have found a way to turn their potential cages into sanctuaries. They've made beauty out of something that's meant to stop their flight. There's a message there. I hope that I, too, can try my best to turn life's challenges into something worthwhile and beautiful.

faux lampwork headpins

BY shayna butler

Figure 1 Figure2 Figure 3

When I saw lampwork headpins for the first time I knew I had to have some and, since I am a DIY kind of gal, having a new supply on my wish list is an open invitation to experiment. I am not set up to work with glass so I had to come up with my own way to make colorful and glossy headpins. With these instructions and a few inexpensive tools and materials you will be on your way to making some, too!

forming the headpins

1. With safety goggles on, use the wire cutters to cut several pieces of wire about 3" in length. For my small-tipped headpins I used 22-gauge brass wire and for the larger ones I used 18-gauge. I cut about 40 pieces and found that number quite manageable.

note: For efficiency, I would not recommend working with a batch of less than 15.

2. Curl the end of each wire with the pliers. The curl doesn't have to be pretty or uniform; you just need a base for the clay to keep it from slipping off the wire. *(Figure 1)*

3. Form a bit of clay into a ball and place the ball over the curl of the wire. Work the ball into the shape you desire. Use a tiny bit of clay for smaller headpins and more for the larger ones. Do this for each piece of wire. *(Figure 2)*

4. Shape decorative components like dimensional dots and rosettes out of the clay and adhere them to the balls with the Liquid Sculpey. Apply the Liquid Sculpey with a toothpick or an old paintbrush; it will not wash off your brush. *(Figure 3)*

note: Using Liquid Sculpey on the dimensional components strengthens the bond to the headpin.

5. Place the headpins on a cookie sheet lined with a piece of wax paper, and cure them according to

MATERIALS

- Safety goggles
- Wire cutters
- Wire, 18- and 22-gauge (I used antiqued brass wire.)
- Needle-nose pliers
- Original Sculpey® oven-bake clay, white
- Sculpey Translucent Liquid
- Toothpicks
- Cookie sheet
- Wax paper
- Oven
- Foam tray
- Acrylic paints
- Paintbrush
- UTEE™, clear
- Cup with water
- Heat gun
- Heat-resistant surface

optional

- Craft sheet, heat-resistant
- Glass microbeads
- Beads

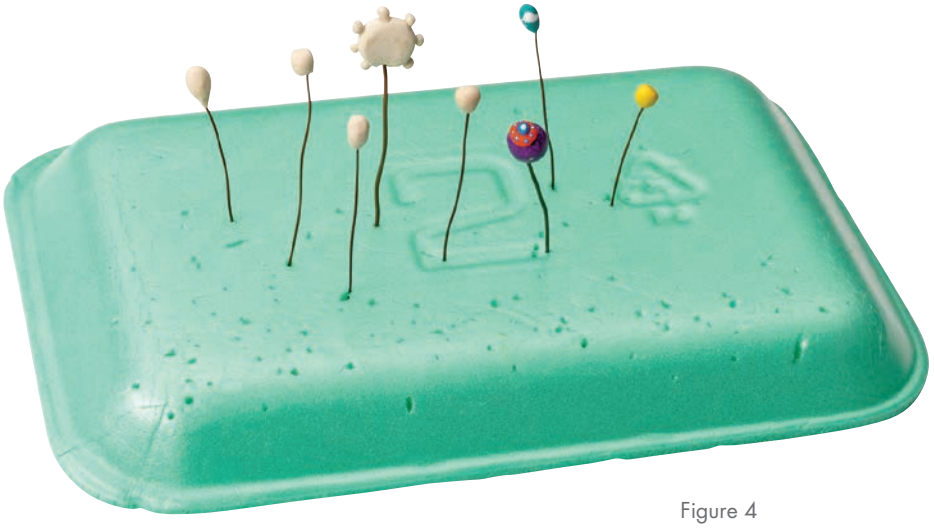


Figure 4

Figure 5

the manufacturer's instructions. I bake mine in my home oven at 275°F for 15 minutes. Allow the headpins to cool completely before moving on to the next step.

painting the headpins

1. Turn the foam tray upside down and stick the pins into the bottom of the tray. *(Figure 4)* This will help to keep the paint from smearing. Paint each of the headpins a solid color, using several different colors. You may wish to add another coat of paint to some, depending on how thick the paint is and how well it covers.

2. Add details with more paint. *(Figure 5)* For the smaller headpins I usually keep them solid colored. The larger ones I decorate in a couple of different ways.
   - Paint polka dots with contrasting colors of acrylic paint.
   - Splatter acrylic paint thinned with water.
   - Add glass microbeads (See finishing, step 4).

3. Scrape off any paint that ended up on the wire and let the pins dry completely before moving on to the next step.

finishing

note: For the next steps you must work over a heat-resistant surface. I have a flat range stove, so I just use the top of it. You could also use a heat-resistant craft sheet for this step.

1. Dip the headpin in a cup of water and roll it in UTEE, covering the whole tip. Let the water dry a bit or the paint will crack. I do several headpins in an assembly line fashion. By the time I dip about 20, the first one is dry enough to heat up.

note: This step gives the headpins the glassy look they need and protects the paint you applied. Do not overcoat them or the UTEE will start to yellow from the heat and layers. Two quick layers should be enough.

2. Warm up the heat gun for a minute or so, and then melt the UTEE down with the heat gun until the UTEE looks like water droplets.

note: It's important to warm up the heat gun. If the air coming out of the gun is cool, it will blow the UTEE off the headpin instead of melting it.

3. Using the pliers to hold the headpin, quickly dip the headpin back into the UTEE while it is still hot, and then heat the UTEE with the heat gun again until you have a smooth surface.

tip: Since the UTEE wants to drip with gravity, I rotate the headpins as I heat them and sometimes flip them upside down to prevent drips.

4. Optional: Pour some microbeads into a cup or lid. After you heat the second coat of UTEE, dip the tip of the hot headpin into the microbeads. Apply a little more heat and rotate the pin some more to incorporate the beads down into the UTEE layer and to keep the beads from falling off.

note: Some of the lampwork headpins I have found online are decorated with frit. Frit is a mix of various sized gran-

Figure 6

ules of glass. This gives the headpins a bumpy texture and makes them look like they have been dipped in sprinkles. To mimic this look, I chose to dip the tips of some of the headpins in microbeads.

using the headpins

You have made the headpins; now what will you do with them? Make beautiful jewelry of course! You can use them a few different ways.

- Cut the wire down to about 1" and curl the wire to make a simple dangle.
- Add a bead or 2 before you cut the wire for a layered look.
- With the headpins on 22-gauge wire, you can wrap the wire several times around the top of the bead for a different look. *(Figure 6)*

When you are done, why don't you load them up to the Share Your Art gallery at clothpaperscissors.com? I'd love to see your take on this!

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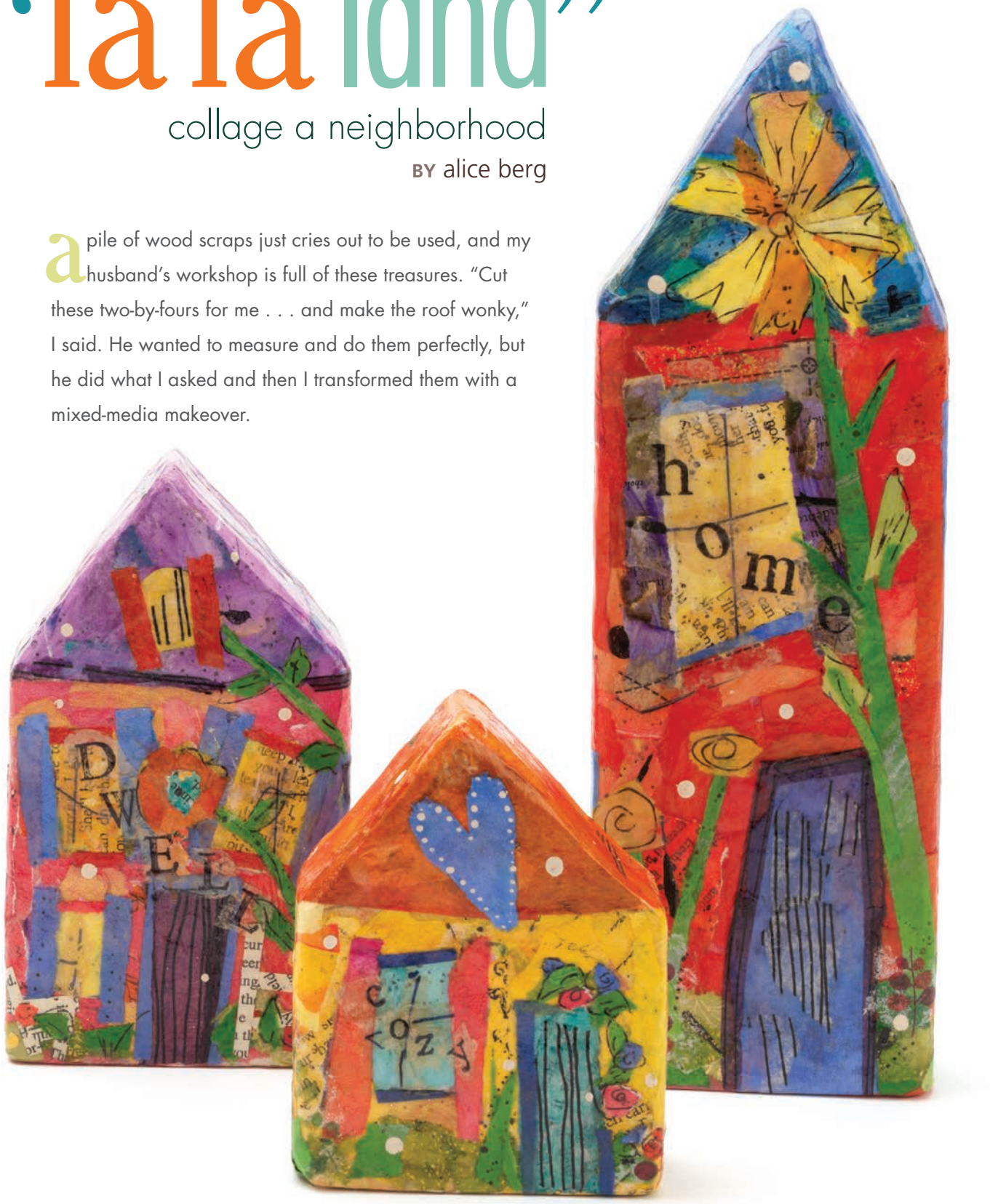
“la la land”

collage a neighborhood

BY alice berg

a pile of wood scraps just cries out to be used, and my husband’s workshop is full of these treasures. “Cut these two-by-fours for me . . . and make the roof wonky,” I said. He wanted to measure and do them perfectly, but he did what I asked and then I transformed them with a mixed-media makeover.



MATERIALS

- Lumber scraps, two-by-four
- Pencil
- Saw: band, mitre, jig, or hand
- Sanding sponge or fine sandpaper
- Paintbrushes
- Gesso
- Assorted papers, painted and unpainted: old books, maps, sheet music, tissue paper, napkins, dress patterns, rice paper, etc.
- Gel medium, gloss
- Acrylic paint (I use Golden Artist Colors® fluid acrylics; Lumiere® by Jacquard, and others.)
- Paper plates or coffee filters, for sorting papers
- Rubber stamps (My favorites include stamps by Memory Box and All Night Media, and a variety of alphabet stamps.)
- Stamp pad (I used StazOn® stamp pads, black and red.)
- Artist pen (I used a black, medium-point Pitt® pen by Faber-Castell.)
- Gloss varnish (I use Liquitex®.)

Use these houses as a canvas. Cut some wood, paint some paper, turn on some music, and get lost in the creative zone. Enjoy the process as much as the product.

Figure 1

Figure 2

directions

preparing the base

1. Cut the two-by-four into a variety of lengths. Mark the roof with a pencil and cut it with a saw. Sand the edges until smooth. *(Figure 1)*
2. Paint a light coat of gesso on the wood piece. Let dry. *(Figure 2)*
3. Tear pieces of unpainted book pages and other interesting papers. Using gel medium, glue the papers to the house, completely covering the house. Turn the printed papers in different directions for interest. Be sure to wrap the paper around the edges of the roof and house, too. Let dry. *(Figure 3)*

tip: Use different kinds of paper in the same color family. The papers will blend nicely.

4. Lightly sand the house and paint a thin coat of gesso over the paper. This step creates a smooth "canvas" to work on. Let dry. *(Figure 4)*

note: Much of this paper will be covered in the collage process, but you might have some show through.

5. Lightly sketch the approximate placement of the door, windows, roofline, flowers, etc., onto the house with the pencil.
6. Underpaint different sections of the house with different colors of acrylic paint. This will give you a

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

"collage-by-number" base. If there are some gaps between the papers, the paint will fill in the spaces. *(Figure 5)*

collage the house

1. Tear the assorted papers and separate the individual colors on paper plates or coffee filters to create your paint box.
2. Use a paintbrush to apply gel medium to a small area on the house. Place a piece of the torn paper on the gel medium and brush more gel medium on top of the paper to seal it. Continue "painting" with your papers to cover the house. *(Figure 6)*

make your own painted papers

If you don't already have a stash of painted papers, here are the directions to make a batch.

1. Put a little acrylic paint in a small paper cup, add water, and stir to the consistency of milk.
2. Place newspaper or a large plastic bag on your work surface, lay some papers on top, and paint the papers using a chip brush or any wide brush. Mix colors if you like. Often I end up combining leftover paints for some great mystery colors. Just have a good time creating your own painted paper palette.
3. Let the papers dry. Hang them on a clothesline, or lay them out on newspaper or on the lawn to dry.
4. Add interesting touches such as spritzing with thinned metallic gold or silver paint, or do some stamping. Make lines with acrylic paint using the edge of a credit card, and add polka dots using the end of a paintbrush. Work quickly. When the paper is torn you will be adding little surprises to your collage, not the exact markings you put on the papers.

Figure 6

3. Tear, cut, and apply additional shapes to the house: flowers from paper napkins, lines from dress patterns, and words from book pages.

4. Stamp letters and images onto tissue and add the tissue to the collage. Tear individual letters and place them in a casual arrangement. Let dry. *(Figure 6)*

5. Dip the end of a small paintbrush into acrylic paint and put a few dots here and there. Polka dots add to the whimsical look. Let the house dry completely.

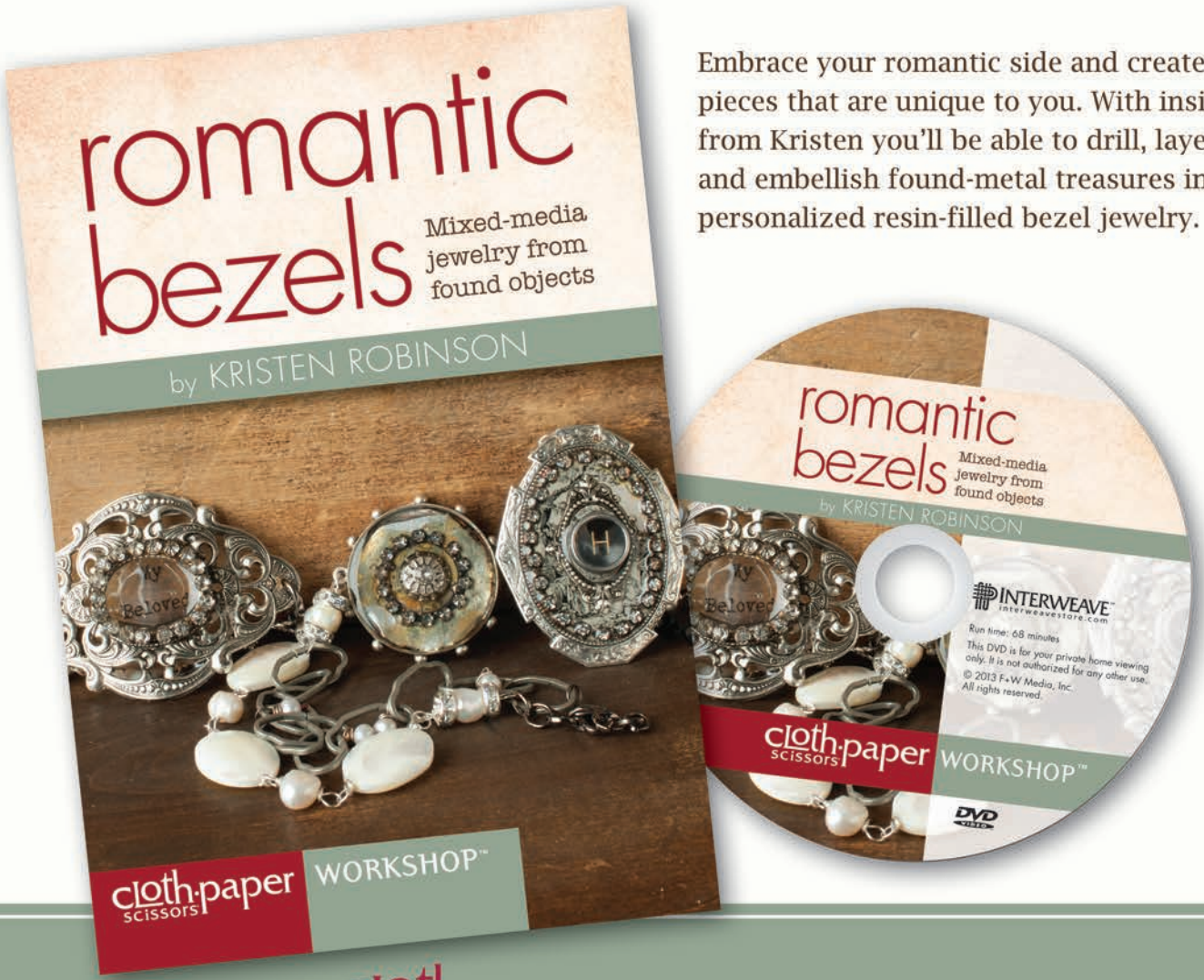
6. Lightly sand the house so it is smooth, wipe it with a paper towel, and use the Pitt pen to define the shapes and flowers. Sign your work.

7. Apply several coats of gloss varnish to finish.

Create Dreamy Pieces of Wearable Art

with Kristen Robinson

Embrace your romantic side and create pieces that are unique to you. With insight from Kristen you'll be able to drill, layer, and embellish found-metal treasures into personalized resin-filled bezel jewelry.



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the great Grafix® CHALLENGE

ten of our contributing artists, whose work covers many styles of mixed media—from jewelry making to assemblage, were sent a special challenge package of Grafix products. The package included Shrink Film, transparent Computer Grafix, Rub-onz™, and Dura-Lar™ matte film. Each artist was asked to create a piece of mixed-media art using at least one of these products. Below is a sampling of the projects these talented artists created. To see photos of the entire challenge, including works by Lynn Krawczyk, Jenny Cochran Lee, Rebekah Meier, and Dawn DeVries Sokol; links to each artist's blog post about their project; and more information on Grafix, visit our site bit.ly/GrafixChallenge.

Lisa Thorpe

For several days after receiving the Grafix materials I was struggling, so I reread the instructions. Use your signature style, it said. Right then the phrase, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush" popped into my head and it took on new meaning with this challenge. Typically the idiom is described as meaning it's better to have something certain than take a risk to get more and lose everything. I've always thought of this phrase as having a bit of the coward in it, a fear of taking the leap into the unknown. But I realized that there is no cowardice in digging down and doing what you know, there is wisdom in looking inward, taking stock, and making something new out of what you have. I used the Computer Grafix for my central image and the Dura-Lar to create three stencils!

Seth Apter

I like to take commercial art products and apply a twist to make them my own. So when I saw the Grafix Rub-onz Transfer Film, I knew that this was the item I would build my artwork around. Rather than altering a commercial rub-on, I could create my own. The basis for this piece was a photograph I took of a vintage clock face that I turned into a rub-on using the Transfer Film. I have to say, after the inspiring experience I had creating this work, there is no doubt I will be using Transfer Film time and again.

Jeannie Palmer Moore

I was curious how the Computer Grafix Film would do if fed through my printer so I printed a photo of Winston Buford, my bloodhound, onto it. Pleased with the results, I added the Computer Film to a small quilt. It was easily stitched (even free-motion). No ripping or tearing occurred while sewing. The transparency adds nice dimension to the quilt.

Amanda Russell

I had wanted to design a cross-section diagram of a steampunk heart for quite a while. Upon receiving the Grafix products, I knew right away that my heart's time had come. I had worked with Shrink Film before and knew it would make excellent gears. Rub-onz made it easy to incorporate child-written words and clear images of fire hydrant parts. Using the transparent Computer Grafix sheets, I caged my heart in a hardware cloth transparency and gave the photos protective covers with stamped dates.

Sue Bleiweiss

I worked with full-size sheets of the Shrink Film to create my Coptic stitch book. I wanted to see the effect the shrinking process would have when the surface was painted with multiple layers. I was intrigued with the way the film transformed from a thin piece of plastic into such a solid substantial surface when it was shrunk.

Erin Partridge

I approached the Great Grafix Challenge by diving in headfirst; I opened the supplies and tried them all! This method was fun because I could switch back and forth between different materials and not spend time watching paint dry. I ended up developing a portrait of Sammy, my African Grey parrot, on the Dura-Lar. African Grey parrots represent inner beauty in Yoruba myth, so the layers and translucency fit with the subject matter.

DON'T forget

to read more about the Grafix projects and more at **bit.ly/GrafixChallenge.**

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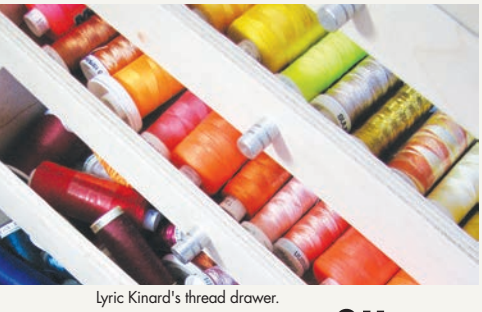
Annabel Wrigley's studio space



Lyric Kinard's thread drawer.

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what a hoot

mixed-media owls

MATERIALS

- Wooden egg (I used a 4" egg.)
- Acrylic paint
- Paintbrushes, assorted
- Tissue paper, white
- Mod Podge®, matte finish
- Paper towels
- Pencil
- Drafting circle stencil
- Micron® pen, black (I used a size .08.)
- Gel pen, white
- Scissors
- Decorative paper
- Ink pad, black
- Artist chalk
- Spray acrylic coating, gloss

BY ashlie blake

As an artist, I tend to look at things differently. Take the wooden egg. Rather than thinking of its holiday-related references, I was drawn to the egg for its shape. When I decided the egg was the starting point for my next mixed-media adventure, it seemed only natural to create owls, since owls have intrigued me since childhood. I liked the idea of putting paper onto the egg, and the owl soon became a place to use all my favorite art materials and do some experimenting with new techniques. When I finished the first owl, I was immediately pleased and inspired. I knew there would be more to come! Meet my parliament.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

directions

design

1. Paint the surface of the egg with 3 coats of your desired color of paint. I used a bright and vibrant aqua. *(Figure 1)* Let dry. Don't worry about flaws in the wood; they will not appear in your final product.

2. Rip the tissue paper into small pieces. Working in small sections at a time, apply a thin layer of Mod Podge to the egg and adhere the torn tissue to the egg. Continue until the entire surface of the egg is coated. *(Figure 2)* Let dry.

3. Using a large paintbrush, dry brush the surface of the egg with the color you used for the base coat. Do not apply a solid coat of paint; you want to see the tissue paper underneath. Let dry, and then repeat with a lighter version of the original color. I used baby blue. You should now have a textured appearance to the owl shape. *(Figure 3)*

note: Dry brushing is accomplished by taking a small amount of paint onto a dry brush, wiping the brush onto a paper towel until very little paint remains on the brush, and then brushing the remaining paint onto the work-in-progress.

4. Draw in the face shape with pencil. I used a shape that resembles a rounded peanut lying sideways. Use the drafting circle stencil to draw in a basic eye shape and draw the eyelid freehand. Using the stencil again, draw in the pupil and iris. Lastly, draw in the beak a bit lower than the eyes. *(Figure 4)*

5. Fill in the face shape with paint. I used baby blue for this. Paint in the whites of the eyes. Paint in the irises. Paint the eyelids and the beak. Leave the pupils blank for now. *(Figure 5)*

6. Paint in scallops around each eye. I used light yellow for this, shading with an antique gold. Shade around the face with blue paint, including the inner and outer corners of the owl's eyelids. Use the pencil and trace the features of the owl's face to add definition. Paint in the pupils and add long black eyelashes. *(Figure 6)*

7. Draw scallops around the outside of the owl's face with the Micron pen and add highlights with the white gel pen. Don't forget the white reflections in each eye. *(Figure 7)*

assembly

1. Cut a small pile of paper feathers from the decorative paper. Individually ink each feather by gently rubbing the ink pad against the edges of the paper to create a shaded, aged effect.

Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

2. Starting at the bottom of the egg, apply each feather individually, overlapping the feathers as you work from the bottom to the top.

note: Each row of feathers will decrease in number with the bottom layer having the most and the top layer (closest to the face) the least.

3. Brush a paintbrush into the chalk and rub color onto the face to create the owl's cheeks.

4. Cut out a heart shape from the decorative paper. I chose to harmonize the scallops around the eyes with the color of the heart. Ink the edges of the heart and apply the heart to the egg with Mod Podge.

5. Cut out wing shapes, ink the edges, and apply a wing to each side of the owl.

6. Cut out a circle from decorative paper the size and shape of the bottom of the egg. Ink the edge of the circle, sign your name, and adhere the circle to the bottom of the egg/owl.

Figure 7

Figure 8

tip: You can match the size and shape of the circle on the bottom of the egg by using the architectural circle stencil, if desired.

7. Spray the owl with the acrylic coating and let dry. *(Figure 8)*

from nature to art

Using your photos as a guide

BY gabriela domville dondisch

Do you love to take pictures? Use them to create art. I love being outdoors—running, hiking, strolling along the beach. I find the shapes in the flowers and leaves very pleasing—the intricate patterns in nature attract me. I often take pictures or make drawings in my sketchbook of things that I discover along the way and store them in folders for reference.

With these techniques, I have found a way to use my wonderful nature pictures to make something artistic.

MATERIALS

- Image, a photo or a copyright-free image

  note: Choose an image that is easy to trace and sharp enough to see details.
- Printer
- Photocopies of the photo (fit to size)
- Tape
- Scissors
- Canvas: natural, medium-weight
- Freezer paper (I use Reynolds® freezer paper.)
- Iron and ironing board
- Pressing cloth
- Transfer paper (I use Saral® transfer paper.)
- Pencil
- Kneaded eraser
- Fluid acrylics (I use Golden Artist Colors®.)
- Gac-100 multipurpose polymer
- Container with water
- Wax paper or palette
- Paintbrushes, a variety of sizes
- Paper towel
- Matte medium
- Sewing machine with free-motion capability
- Thread (I use black.)

optional

- Fusible web
- Ready-made pillow cover, place mat, or table runner
- Stretched canvas
- Décor fabric for background
- Picture frame

directions

the image

1. Decide on the size of the image and print it out. If you don't have a printer you can always take it to a copy center to have it sized. *(Figure 1)*
2. If the image is bigger than 8" × 10", use tape to arrange the copies to recreate the image.
3. Cut out the image leaving a ¼" border all the way around.

Figure 1

tip: Leaving a ¼" border will enable you to trace right on the outline of the image.

the canvas

1. Cut the canvas fabric into a rectangle or square big enough to accommodate the image.
2. Cut a piece of freezer paper slightly larger than the cut piece of canvas.
3. Place the canvas on the ironing board, face down. Lay the freezer paper, shiny-side down, on top of the fabric and cover it with a pressing cloth. Using a high temperature, iron until the canvas is adhered to the freezer paper. *(Figure 2)* Be careful not to overdo it or the paper will lose its tackiness.

Figure 2

Figure 3

tracing

note: It is important to decide in advance what you want to trace. I choose the lines that make the contour of the image as well as any details that will help me to paint more accurately. I start with the outline of the image and do the details last.

1. Tape the canvas/freezer paper sheet onto your worktable with the freezer-paper side down to control your tracing.
2. Cut a piece of transfer paper as big as the image and tape it on top of the canvas/freezer paper sheet.

tip: Saral transfer paper is made of graphite so be careful when tracing. Resting or rubbing your hand over the image can cause a bit of a mess, but a kneading rubber eraser will remove any unwanted graphite.

3. Place the image on top of the transfer paper and tape it in place. *(Figure 3)*
4. Trace over the image with the pencil. As you go along, partially lift the photocopy to peek and make sure you traced all of the details. If you missed some details, trace over them or use a pencil directly on the canvas to complete the image. *(Figure 4)*

Figure 4

painting

note: I select my color palette according to the colors in the photo, but you can use whatever colors you like. I use the acrylic paint diluted as if it were watercolor, and I use several shades of

Figure 5

Figure 6

the same color.

1. Mix the paint with polymer and test the colors on wax paper or a palette. Diluting the paint with the polymer changes the color. *(Figure 5)*

2. Test the canvas for absorbency, as fabric varies from supplier to supplier. Mix some paint with water and paint on the canvas, and then mix some paint with the polymer and paint on the canvas again. *(Figure 6)* If you find the fabric is too absorbent, work with polymer instead of water. This way you can control the color within the tracing. After determining whether you'll use polymer or water, mix the paint with the polymer or water and paint the image. Work in the darker colors first, especially the ones in the background. Dilute the paint even more for lighter areas. Try to keep within the traced lines. Let some areas dry as you go along, and then go back again with hints of another shade of color, thinned with polymer (or water). *(Figure 7)*

tip: Remove any unwanted paint right away with a paper towel.

3. Once you are finished with the painting, give the canvas a coat of matte medium to tone down the shine of the polymer. Let dry.

Figure 7

sewing

note: I find the sewing part of this project the most challenging so I recommend that you have a plan before you start to prevent unnecessary jumps from one place to another.

1. Free-motion stitch along the traced lines, making small moves to give it a hand-drawn look. Start with the outline and then go into the details using the photo for reference. Try using a mix of single and double passes to create interesting lines.

2. Once in a while, stop sewing, cut the thread, and tie off the thread ends. Too many threads on the back of the canvas make it confusing.

tip: Cut the thread tails as you go along to prevent them from tangling in the bobbin.

3. When you are finished stitching, remove the freezer-paper backing and cut out the image. *(Figure 8)*

mounting

There are several options for using these paintings.

- Sew it onto a purchased pillowcase, place mat, or table runner, or attach it with fusible web.
- Display it in a picture frame with a fabric background.
- Sew your art to a piece of fabric, stretch it, and frame it.
- Paint a stretched canvas and glue your art to the canvas.

Figure 8

Painted flowers and leaves on a purchased pillow.

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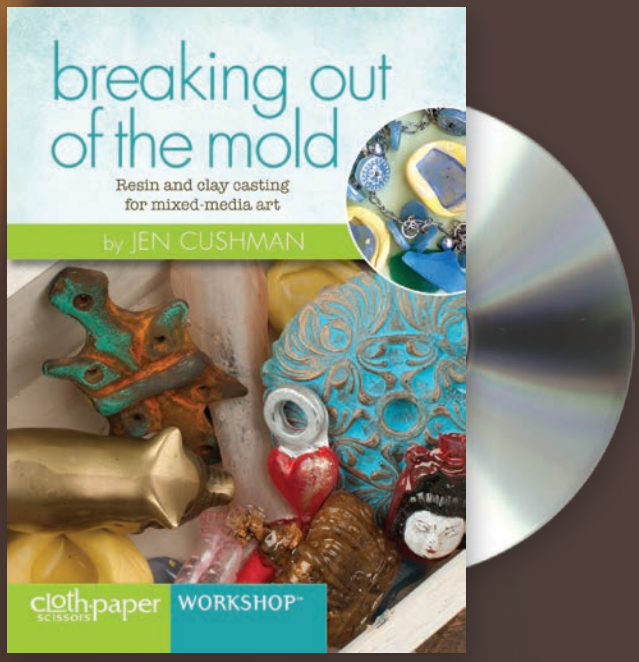

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MATERIALS

- Paper scraps: old book pages, scrapbook papers, doodles and art mistakes, hand-painted papers, bits of trash
- Sewing machine
- Thread, a variety of colors
- Tissue paper, colored
- Scissors
- Matte medium
- Paintbrush, small

BY jenny cochran lee

Like most mixed-media artists, I love my work to be filled with texture. Creating bumps and ridges with found objects and fabrics is easy, but developing tactile interest with paper alone can be more of a challenge. This easy sewn-paper textile technique allows you to layer your favorite papers and stitch them together to create a sturdy and richly textured piece that can be used in a variety of ways. I even used this technique in my new CLOTH PAPER SCISSORS Workshop™ DVD: Add to, Undo, & Redo.

Figure 1

directions

1. Collect a pile of paper scraps. *(Figure 1)* You can coordinate colors and patterns or allow serendipity to choose for you. I like to just grab a scrap without thinking, allowing the colors and patterns to work their magic without my input.

2. Think about the final shape you want to create. Any shape will work: circle, rectangle, or giant blob. I like to aim for a piece that is about 8" × 10", since that size will fit into the organizing bins in my studio.

Figure 2

tip: Keep in mind, larger shapes can be challenging to sew. If you want to create something on a larger scale, consider creating the textile in smaller pieces and then patching them together using glue or some snazzy hand stitching.

3. Start by stitching 2 scraps together. *(Figure 2)*

4. As you reach the end of the second piece of paper, stop sewing. Grab another paper scrap, layer it over or under the edge of the second paper scrap, and continue to stitch. Repeat this process of stitching and adding paper scraps, rotating the piece as you sew to create the final shape.

5. When the final shape has been achieved, remove the piece from the machine. At this point, the entire piece will be a loosely stitched textile. *(Figure 3)* The next steps will give it some strength.

6. Starting at the top of one side of the textile, stitch a vertical line to the bottom of the textile. Stitch parallel vertical lines all the way across the textile. Remove the piece from the machine.

7. Turn the textile 90° and repeat Step 6. The textile will now be covered with a grid of stitches.

8. Optionally, change the thread color in your machine and add

Figure 3

more stitching. I like to add more horizontal and vertical lines or swirls of bright color. Change thread colors again and add even more lines of stitching.

tip: Try to avoid stitching in one place more than once, as repeated stitches will perforate the paper.

9. Cut the colored tissue paper into shapes or tear it into small pieces.

10. Using a small paintbrush and liquid matte medium, glue the pieces randomly across the textile. *(Figure 4)* Allow to dry completely.

Your finished textile can be used in many ways. Try using it as a journal page or background for collage, cut it into embellishment pieces, or sew some trim on top to create a whimsical bunting.

more online

See more of Jenny's stitched paper at clothpaperscissors.com.

Figure 4

make your own stamps

WITH DIES AND FOAM

BY danee kaplan

I discovered this method serendipitously while working through Tim Holtz's A Compendium of Curiosity, Vol 2. In a technique Tim calls simply "Custom Foam Stamps," die-cut craft foam is used to make a rubber stamp. The resulting stamp is a basic, one-dimensional shape.

As I set out to explore this technique, the only craft foam I had on hand was a package of door hangers, which happen to be significantly thicker than the standard craft foam sheets. I die cut some butterflies and decided to see if I could alter the surface of the foam to add some dimension to the stamp. What I came up with gives the look of a hand-carved stamp but is much easier, faster, and doesn't require any specially purchased carving tools.

MATERIALS

- Craft foam door hangers
- Steel Rule Dies, capable of cutting thicker materials (I used Sizzix® Bigz dies and Movers and Shapers.)
- Die Cutting machine (I used a Sizzix Vagabond machine.)
- Carving tools: wooden skewer, toothpick, dry ballpoint pen, paintbrush, etc. (I like to use a Tim Holtz® Craft Pick.)
- Recycled plastic packaging or acrylic blocks
- Adhesive, Aleene's® Tack-It Over & Over glue or double-sided adhesive sheets

optional

- Hot glue

directions

note: I used a die-cut machine, but you could also cut the foam with sharp, heavy-duty scissors, working slowly and carefully.

1. Begin by choosing your die-cut shapes. Obviously, not all die-cut shapes will work for this technique. As you select the shapes, think about how the shape would be improved by adding lines to define areas, to make it look more natural, or to add interest.
2. The size of the die will determine how it is positioned on the foam. Play around with positioning the foam on the die in order to cut the shape correctly.
3. Run the die and foam through the die-cutting machine. Because the foam is thick, it needs a little help to get started. I found it easiest to use the extended cutting pads and start with the die itself 1"–2" from the edge of the cutting pads so that the cutting pads slid into

detail tips

- Birds, butterflies, and animals all look better with added details such as facial features, defined body parts, wings, etc.
- Hearts can be sweet with words written on them (remember to write everything backwards) or be whimsical with added design details.
- Houses and cars are enhanced with windows and doors, defined rooflines, and shutters.
- Flowers and leaves are fun and super easy to jazz up by adding veins and texture.

the machine before the bulk of the sandwich. The foam door hangers cut beautifully.

4. Add lines, circles, dots, hash marks, etc., to the die-cut shapes with the carving tools to enhance the image. Use different tools for different effects. Play around and have fun. If you don't like how it looks, flip the foam over and carve the other side. *(Figure 1)*

5. To make repositionable stamps for use with acrylic blocks, paint a thin coat of the Tack It Over & Over on the back of each stamp and allow it to dry for several hours before adhering the stamp.

6. If you want to permanently mount the stamps, I recommend removing the film from one side of an adhesive sheet and applying the sheet to the back of the foam before you die-cut it. Run the foam/adhesive through the cutting machine, remove the second protective film, and mount the foam to either a piece of recycled plastic packaging *(Figure 2)* or to cardboard cut to the appropriate size. You could also use hot glue to adhere the foam to the plastic.

Simple die-cut stamp

Faux hand-carved version of the simple die-cut stamp

tip: The stamps clean up well with baby wipes.

This technique is a great way to get extra use out of your die-cutting system, expand your stamp collection, and it's an inexpensive way to get stamps that are personalized by you.

Figure 1

Figure 2

quick tips

- Cut multiple copies with the same die and then cut the foam apart to allow you to ink up the various components with different colored inks.
- Mounting the die-cut shapes on acrylic blocks or clear plastic makes it easy to line up the stamp right where you want it.

make
MINE MINI

READER CHALLENGE RESULTS

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Patricia Gaignat • Westbury, NY

Krista Takacs • Knoxville, TN

Kim Henkel • Haines Junction, YT, Canada

Darlene K. Campbell • Danville, OH

Miriam Miller • Kaysville, UT

Indira Govindan • Summit, NJ

We invited our readers to create a mini piece of mixed-media art, 4" x 4" or smaller. We wanted readers to try making something that they would normally create large and make it Lilliputian. Entries included jewelry, paintings, encaustic, collage, sewn creations, assemblage, and more. We were impressed with all of the colorful and inspiring pieces we received and enjoyed seeing such creative art in miniature. Here is a sampling of the entries for your enjoyment.

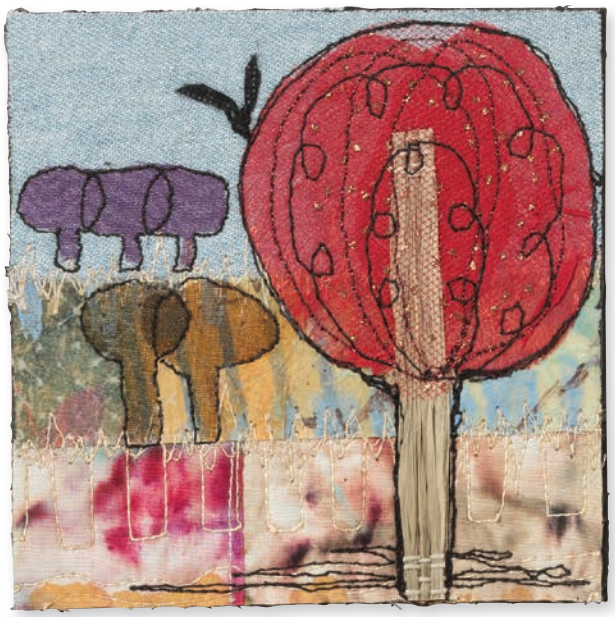
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Julie Luca • Augusta, GA

Donna Ryan • Sandy, OR

Carol Cole • Brookhaven, NY

Tiffany Teske • Canmore, AB, Canada



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Katie Cannon • Covington, GA

Lorna Morck • Los Alamos, CA

Tina Lynch • Gabriola Island, BC, Canada

Sandra Spagnuolo • Cambridge, ON, Canada

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Christie Treen • McIntosh, NM

Randi Lynch • Gabriola Island BC, Canada

Karla Lawrence • Hyattsville, MD

Terry Aske • New Westminster, BC, Canada

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Kathleen Baumann • Phoenix, AZ

Jackie Tury • Chantilly, VA

Shelley Cordier • Corvallis, OR

Sue Nunn • Happy Valley, OR

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Lynda M. Metcalf • Morrisville, NC

Molly J. Fischer • Milford, MA

Pam Waller • Stirling, U.K.

Nancy Belle • Aliso Viejo, CA

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Janis Guyette • Gouldsboro, ME

Keddy Ann Outlaw • Houston, TX

Ro Morrissey • South Orleans, MA

Kate Collins-Thompson • London, ON, Canada

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Ilysa Ginsburg • Branford, FL

Christine Rickert • Waterford, VA

Tammy Olson • Viroqua, WI

Catharine Clarke • Mountain, ON, Canada

FROM TOP TO BOTTOM, LEFT TO RIGHT:

Karen Furst • Wilmington, DE

Glenda Adkinson • Austin, TX

Kathy Johnson • Waterford, CT

Carol Shimokochi • South Pasadena, CA

Amy Hitchcock • Jamaica Plain, MA

P.J. Schadler • Vicenza, Italy

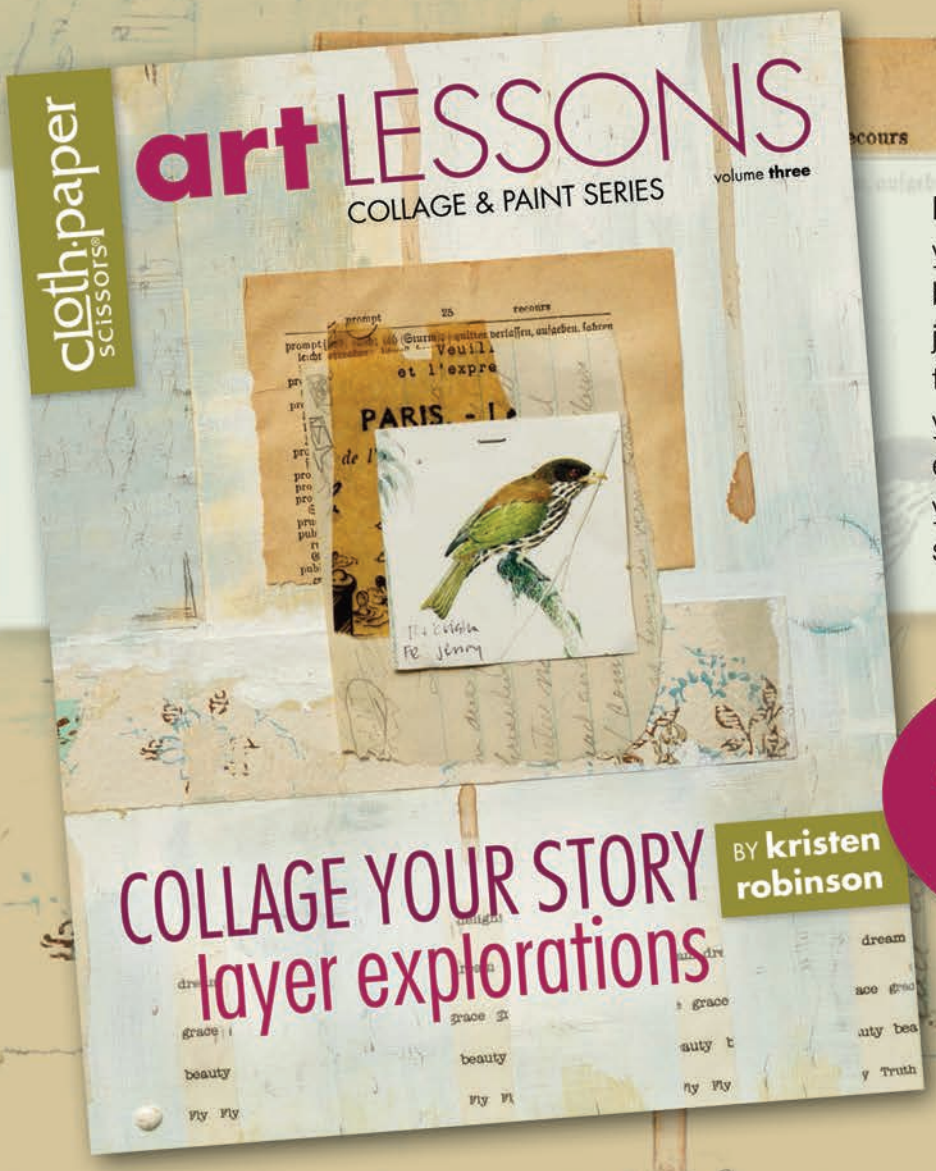
Wanda Edwards • Dartmouth, MA

Jennifer Crotty • Muskogee, OK

Susan Lamatrice • Cary, NC

Make Your Collages Pretty & Personal

Create Lovely Layers with Kristen Robinson



Dive beneath the surface of your collage and paper art by incorporating found items, journal entries, and images to add elements to the story you want to tell. Add that extra personal element to your collage that will tell a story for years to come.

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mixed-media jewelry GIFT swap

mark your CALENDAR!

Your mixed-media jewelry must be in our Sudbury offices by **July 17th, 2013**.

There is nothing better than receiving a surprise in the mail. And what's more special than a new piece of jewelry? Cloth Paper Scissors invites you to be a part of our Mixed-media Jewelry Gift Swap. Use your favorite mixed-media supplies and ideas and send us an inspired pair of earrings, a necklace, a brooch, or a bracelet. A selection of the jewelry will be featured in the November/December 2013 issue. All participants who adhere to the guidelines will receive a randomly chosen piece of jewelry in return. One lucky winner will receive the Editors' Pick prize package, sponsored by iceresin.com and worth more than $100.

the rules

1. Create an original mixed-media piece of jewelry: a brooch, a pair of earrings, a necklace, or a bracelet. Your submission must be sturdy and small enough to ship in a small padded envelope.

note: One submission per person.

2. Your jewelry piece must be free of any text or images that are protected by copyright, unless you have the expressed written permission from the person or institution that holds the copyright and you provide that written permission with your submission.
3. You may use any mixed-media supplies in your arsenal: paper, fabric, inks, paints, markers, stitching, wire . . . or anything that makes your piece unique.
4. Please place your artwork in a plastic bag for safety in shipping and attach a card to the jewelry with your name and contact information. This information will remain attached to the jewelry when it's sent to its new home, so only include the information you wish to share.
5. In addition, please include a photo of your piece of jewelry with your name, address, phone number, and email address on the back.

note: We encourage you to upload a photo of your jewelry on the clothpaperscissors.com community, but this is not required to take part in the challenge.

6. Your artwork must be in our offices no later than July 17th, 2013. At that time a flat shipping and handling fee of $5 U.S. and Canada and $10 for all other international locations will be due. All funds must be in U.S. dollars and made payable to Interweave.
7. All artwork will be shipped by November 15th.
8. Please send your jewelry creation, along with the S&H fee, to:
   Interweave/Cloth Paper Scissors
   Attn: Mixed-media Jewelry Swap
   490 Boston Post Road, Suite 15
   Sudbury, MA 01776

noteworthy

- If you have any questions, please contact Barbara Delaney at bdelaney@interweave.com. Please be sure to include your first and last names and your contact information in all email correspondence.
- By submitting your reader challenge entry, you are authorizing F+W Media, Inc. to publish your project in upcoming publications and promotional materials, on our websites, and in our other e-media, as well as to possibly display it at shows.
- F+W Media, Inc. will not be held responsible for loss or damage due to circumstances beyond our control.

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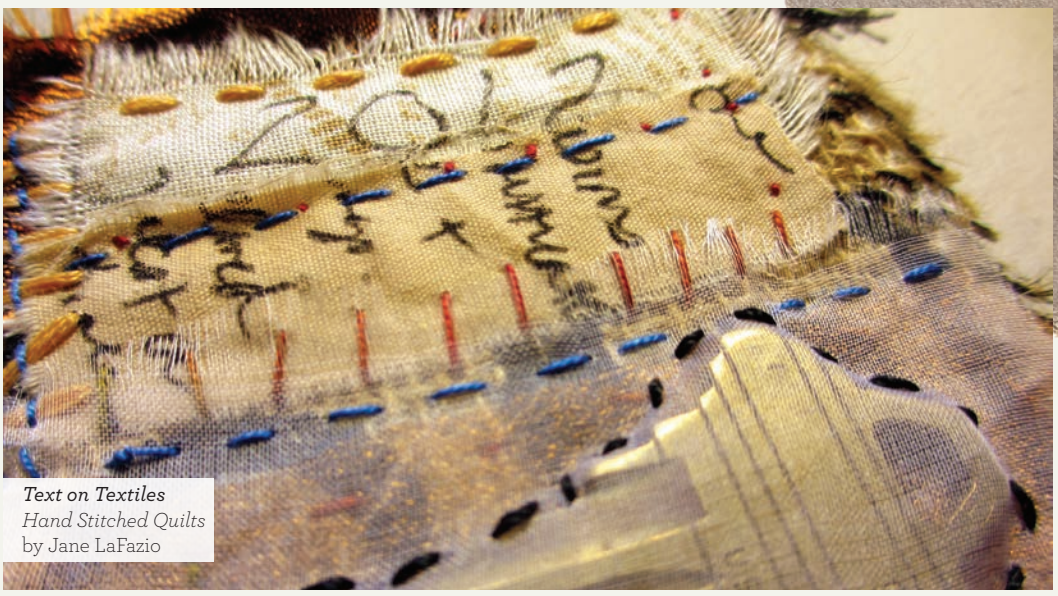
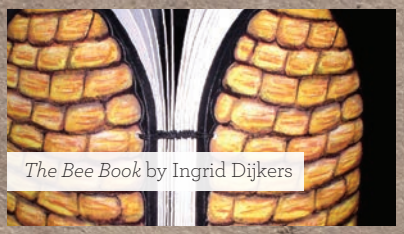
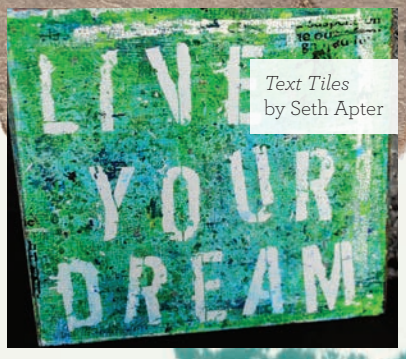


Text on Textiles
Hand Stitched Quilts
by Jane LaFazio



The Bee Book by Ingrid Dijkers



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by Seth Apter

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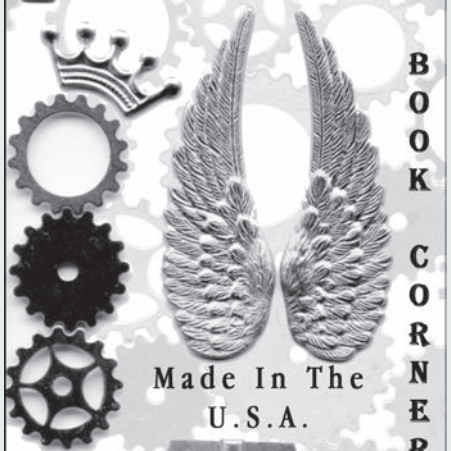

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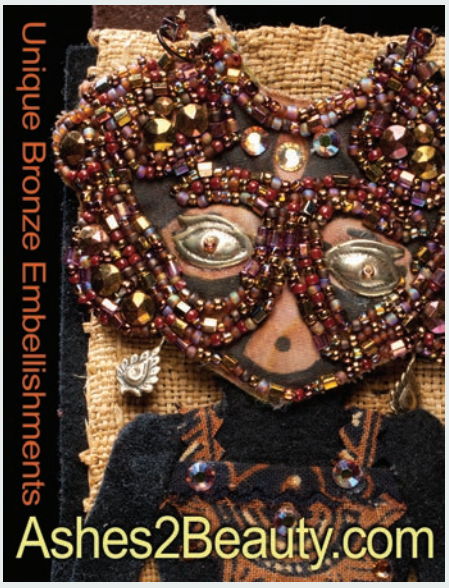

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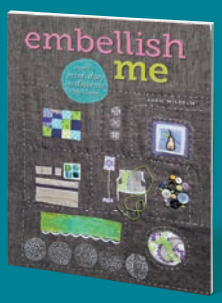

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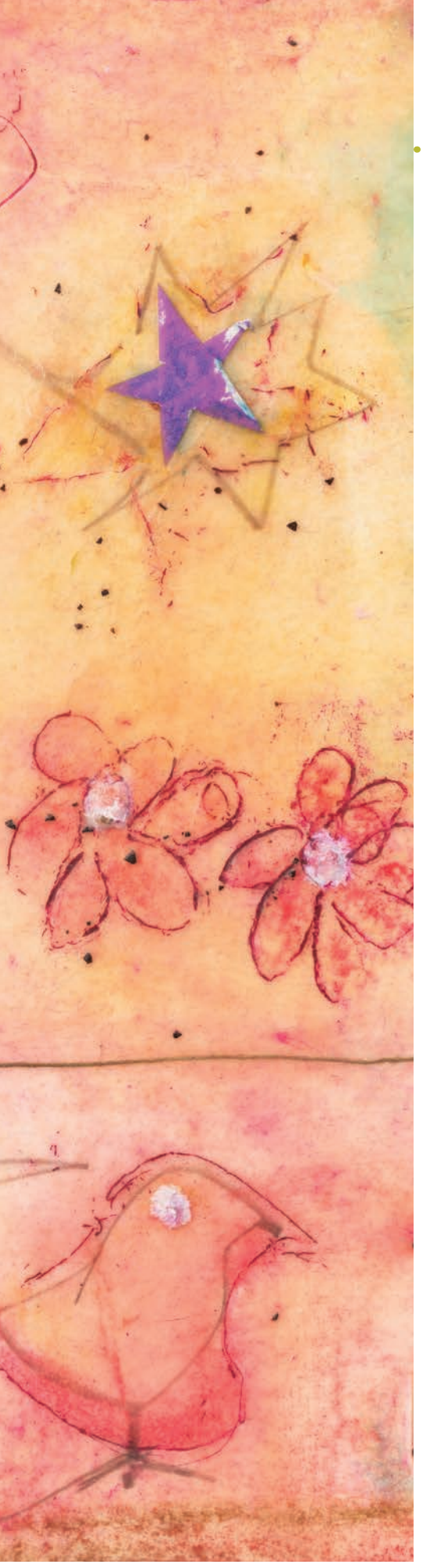
ART brew

BY marty yokawonis

It drives me crazy that so many people think that making a piece of art is an instantaneous, on-demand kind of calling.

It's as though they think artists turn on a switch and go into a frenzied overdrive that compels them to create art—even in a void.

I have been asked to create things by people who believe that an artist just makes pictures without having to think about it, and art can be achieved at any time, like we are a storehouse of ready-made images. I don't personally



know any artists who can legitimately create expressive art with no thought or time spent, dashing off a masterpiece to thrill an audience. Creating artwork, to me, is an act of distillation.

This creative pause in time is not a consistent length of time. You go about your daily business and yet many things are being pulled off the shelves and assembled in your mind. The longer this process goes on, the messier that creation room gets. Piles of possibilities nest in corners. Tables groan beneath stacks of promising ephemera gone through and discarded.

Each day you revise and edit your initial consideration of the art piece you are interested in making. Creating employs visual, sensory, emotional, and mental connections that percolate like an exotic stew beneath the conscious groundswell, waiting for that moment when you take off the lid and let a little of the aroma escape or better yet take a big spoon and dish it up. Art stew takes some time to happen.

When your inner process is ready, when the image is ready to be birthed, you need to make time for its creative debut. Making art isn't usually time-consuming when you have really geared up. Do I see a smirk? Since I just finished a paragraph explaining that it takes some time to come up with a good visual idea it would seem that making the piece would be time-consuming, too.

No, that's usually not the case. It has been my experience that once the inner juices get rolling they are pretty demanding, loudly insisting that you make way for them, overriding silly concerns like taking a shower or eating or sleeping. The muse is a tyrant.

> "Art stew takes some time to happen."

So how do you make time for the artwork? You simply give in and let it take over. I find it's better to create at white-hot intensity than carefully sandwich in a little art-time activity between other daily activities. Artwork made just because you have 10 minutes of nothing else to do doesn't satisfy as much as art brewed in your daily life.

Artistic images made up of your responses to challenges, victories, and even mundane household chores can speak loudly. Take the time to meditate on your imagery. Boil some memories and spice them up with colors like the wind so they can fly. Brew your dreams and the time will be well spent.

Embrace Whimsy in Your Studio

photo by Jeannine Stein

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